

THE
SICK MAN VISITED;

And furnished with
INSTRUCTIONS, MEDITATIONS, and PRAYERS,
FOR
Putting him in mind of his CHANGE;
FOR
Supporting him under his DISTEMPER;
AND FOR
Preparing him for, and Carrying him through, his
LAST CONFLICT with DEATH.

BY
NATHANAEL SPINCKES, A. M. K
Late Prebendary of SARUM, &c.

*Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what
a day may bring forth. PROV. xxvii. 1.*

*Tu tamen mortem, ut nunquam timeas, semper co-
gita. Senec. Epist. 30.*

THE SIXTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

To which is Prefix'd,
A Short Account of the LIFE of the very
Reverend AUTHOR.

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And furnished with
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Putting him in mind of his CHANGE;

FOR
supporting him under the DISTRESS;

AND FOR
Preparing him for
EAST COAST OF AFRICA.



NATHANIEL SPINCKES, A.M.
Late Secretary of the Society.

Printed by J. G. Smith, at the
Printers, in the Strand, London.

THE SIXTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

A Short Account of the LIFE of the very
Reverend AUTHOR.

By J. G. Smith, Esq.
Printed by J. G. Smith, at the
Printers, in the Strand, London.

THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

THE first occasion of the ensuing treatise was the request of a friend, that I would overlook an old book upon this subject, printed in King James I. reign, and would put it into modern English. Which having undertaken, to avoid the tediousness of one continued discourse, without any manner of division, I thought it necessary to cast mine into several parts, that, at the end of each, the reader might have a breathing-time, and so proceed to what follows with the better appetite. And, in a little time, finding some texts of Scripture not so properly applied as ought to have been, some things more largely insisted upon than I apprehend necessary, and many, on the

other hand, that I judged requisite, not meddled with, I resolved to take a different method, and to frame a book, the greatest part whereof should be perfectly new, and the rest so altered and changed, as that it cannot be called the same, And if what I have written may tend to God's glory, and the devout reader's benefit, I shall esteem my time happily employed.

THE consideration of death and eternity is a matter of that vast consequence, to all who know they have immortal souls to save, that whatever either tends to promote this, or may be serviceable in order to the better effect of it, can never be unseasonable; especially when we call to mind, how exceedingly uncertain the time of our stay here is, insomuch that there is no man living, who can be sure, that he has an hour more to live. It was an excellent petition of Moses, or whosoever it was that composed the ninetieth Psalm: So teach us to number our days, as that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, ver. 12. Nor is there any surer course to become wise to the best purposes, viz. the promoting God's glory, and our own everlasting welfare, than by accustoming ourselves often to reflect upon, and seriously weigh with ourselves, the little time we have to spend here, and the immense concern we have depending upon our
good

good improvement of it; nor any folly in the world comparable to theirs, who can be content to idle away their time, and misemploy themselves, when, for aught they know to the contrary, they may be snatched away the next moment; and so, being seized without a due preparation for a better state, may be sentenced to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

THERE is none who is not continually liable to sickness and death; and who ought not therefore to be always furnished with patience and submission to the Divine Will under the former, and to be every day in a readiness for the other. And, to assist the Christian reader in order to these weighty purposes, that so he may be happy both here and hereafter, is the design of the following tract. But then it is incumbent upon him, to apply what is said in it to his own soul; inasmuch as without this it must needs prove insignificant and useless; the best advice that can be given in any case, being of no advantage, where it is not attended to. A man may please himself with what he hears, or reads, and it may serve him for amusement and diversion; but, if this be all the use he makes of it, he grossly deceives his own soul, if he think however to be advantaged by it. Such an one is but like the man spoken of by St. James,

who, (a) beholding his natural face in a glass, goeth away, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was. The true end of reading is improvement. And whosoever therefore would be really benefited by what he reads, must take care to digest it in his thoughts, and then to reduce it to practice, and try to get his life amended by it.

ALMIGHTY God has (b) given us exceeding great and precious promises, and will be sure to make them good in his due time, if we do not senselessly incapacitate ourselves for them. But then it is to be remembered, that they are all conditional, and there is no hope of attaining to them, but by partaking of the Divine Nature, and escaping the corruption which is in the world through lust. We must cleanse and purify ourselves, and serve God faithfully, with reverence and godly fear, before we can look upon ourselves to be interested in his favour, and intitled to the promised salvation. (c) The foundation, the promise and covenant of God, standeth sure, having this seal, for the confirmation of it on his part, that the Lord knoweth, and will own, them that are his: And, on their part, Let every one that nameth

(a) James i. 23, 24.
ii. 19.

(b) 2 Pet. i. 4.

(c) 2 Tim.

the Name of Christ, and pretends to be his disciple and servant, depart from all iniquity. This is the certain and the only way to please God, and to be for ever happy in the enjoyment of him: and it is therefore every one's indispensable duty to demean himself accordingly; and not only when death looks him in the face, and he must expect to be translated hence, but throughout his whole life; as he will undoubtedly be convinced when he comes to die, if not before.

AND oh that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! That they would be serious, and in earnest, and have those thoughts in their health and strength, which they ordinarily have when they come to die! Then they are apt to reflect upon their past lives, with an unfeigned sorrow and regret, for not having made better improvement of them. And, if they had ten thousand worlds at their disposal, these should all go to redeem that time, which they had so vainly squandered away. They will then find to their sorrow and shame, that to prepare themselves for Heaven is not so easy a task as they had imagined, but must be a work of time and pains, and ought indeed to have been the main business of their whole lives. Which being once granted,

it is impossible to give a reason, why they should not all immediately set about it, with the utmost diligence; that since they have here no abiding city, they therefore never cease to seek one that is to come. This is the great end of our living here; and the only way that God has prescribed, in order to a better state. And they who take a contrary course, may infallibly depend upon it, that death will open a frightful scene to them, that will cause them to bethink themselves when it is too late, and to condemn themselves to all eternity, for not having done it sooner.

N. Spinckes.

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 the other include the convulsive heart of his imagination.

down the one, not any understanding, not even
 the other of (the) dark and clear and consistent

T H E

L I F E

Of the REVEREND

Mr. NATHANAEL SPINCKES.

THE venerable author of the following treatise was a man who had no guile, and wanted no virtue: and were he now at my elbow, he would dictate to me to speak of him in humble and simple terms. Perhaps this may be interpreted as an excuse for a plain and unartful relation: but it belongs to them to swell their notes, who cannot gain attention without sounds or shakes.

I do not intend then to raise or muster any appearances of virtues imaginary, or dissemble any foibles: for which reason, though I have little to tempt the curious, I shall have as little to offend the conscientious.

As to the worldling or sensualist, who abandons any or all of the commandments, or the baptized infidel, who renounces his creed in whole or in part; should any such glance upon this portrait, they are permitted to stop here, since no viands are prepared for their strong or fine taste; no garlick or froth for their entertainment; and as they expect, at least wish, no after-reckoning, desirous to resemble the *ἡμερόβιον*, an insect which lives but one single day: they may, if they please, grow better oeconomists of their time; and the one may

B

stroll

stroll on through all the scenes of voluptuousness, and the other indulge the convulsive starts of his imagination; since no fetters can be found strong enough to chain down the one, nor any understanding, not even the wisdom of God, deep and clear and consistent enough to direct the other.

There are a rank of beings who fear and tremble; they fear from what they know, and they tremble from what they feel and expect; not doubting that God's displeasure will more than equal their fear: might we not then presume, that they who are void of fear and trembling, are punies in knowledge and sense? Nay, should they spin out their own bowels, and roll up themselves in their own webs? A fine sum total of their existence!

But the good man, a sketch of whose history and character I here design, was, as a person of sense and religion, quite different in make and frame. He held forth no indulgences or dispensations for the direct breach or sly evasion of God's commandments. His known rule was, *Then shall I not be ashamed, while I have respect unto all thy commandments.* The Papists in their machinery felt his hand heavy and often: The Sectaries he truly pitied as consisting of the weak, the worldly, and the wilful. The profane and profligate, who departed from their duty either by common swearing, gross perjury, or elegant distinctions, had a share of his chastisement; and the jesuit or scribe was as obnoxious to him as the open sinner. The papal dispensations and jesuitical interpretations were to him both alike; and he thought that there were no more exceptions in the second or third than in the first commandment. Indeed he had both a tender and awful sense of the authority of God, and of the eternal and unalterable reasons of good and evil; and this fixed his judgment: he depended that he had no more licence to detract, lie, steal, or dishonour parents, than to commit whoredom or murder: He constantly bore his testimony against removing antient landmarks.

And

And as he was a faithful servant and steward of the morality in *Moses's* house; he was no less diligent as a steward of the mysteries of *Christ*: an *Israelite* indeed, a Christian intirely. For,

As to his faith, it was as unblemished and irreproachable as his life. He had read much; but he had lived more: he had drawn much from the purest fountains; little from the muddy streams: the depositum of his faith he kept sacred, whole and intire, not retailing it by fragments and shreds as a broken vessel or tattered garment, but as the ark in which the safety of the whole world was embarked, as the vesture fit for the spouse of *Christ*, not only made of wrought gold and all glorious within, but without seam woven from the top throughout. He had no esteem for engineers or projectors in religion, nor for the assuming superficial fightmen, whose study is confined to coffee houses, and whose store consists of such extemporary stuff as will easily occur without reading or thinking. Tho' remarkable for meekness, he had no little indignation against all our modern Sadducees, not forgetting those who did mistake a something of Heathenism for Christianity, and who are for reducing their Redeemer to the level with a *Socrates* or *Plato* at the head of a sect. This good man I propose to trace with regard to his station and condition in life; to mention briefly his writings, and the controversies he was engaged in; with a few memoranda of such virtues and Christian graces, as he possess'd in an exemplary and transcendent degree.

NATHANAEL SPINCKES was born at *Castor* in *Northamptonshire*, a few miles from *Petersburgh*; on the confines of *Huntingdonshire*, in the close of the year 1653, or the beginning of 1654. He was the eldest surviving son of the reverend Mr. *Edmund Spinckes*, rector of *Castor*, and *Martha* the eldest daughter of *Thomas Elmes* of *Lilford* in *Huntingdonshire*, Esq;

EDMUND, our author's father, appears to be a native of *New-England*, and is said to have come from thence with Dr. *Patrick*, afterwards Bishop of *Ely*: how

ever, he was a person of good literature, and fortune; but my intended brevity confines me to say transiently, that his discharging the relation of chaplain commendably to Mr. *Elmes*, introduced him to the happiness of an agreeable companion for life, with seven hundred and fifty pounds, and near an hundred pounds *per ann.* in *terra firma* at *Warmington*. This is manifest from undoubted instruments now in my possession; which likewise prove, that he was enabled, with the accession of his own fortune, to support his family in a reputable manner; and, besides the liberal provision he made for our author as first-born, to give four younger children above four hundred pounds apiece. I ought not to omit one other circumstance, which every reader is left to pass his judgment upon: *Edmund* liv'd in troublous times, and warp'd so far in the great rebellion, that he took the solemn league and covenant; and was possess'd of the rectory of *Castor* annex'd to the Bishoprick of *Petersburgh*, the See being vacant 1648; but I have this to say for him *pleno ore*, that when he was removed soon after the restoration, even before the *Bartholomew* act took place, he constantly conformed to the Church of *England*; and seem'd only to decline his ministerial function, because a man who took opposite oaths, had the sentence of guiltiness proceeding against him. *Edmund* died at *Warmington* 1671, and *Martha* 1693; as I presume from the probat of *Edmund's* Will, and the letters of administration granted after *Martha's* death.

I was much puzzled to find, where our author laid the foundation of that noble structure which in progress of time was rais'd upon it; but at last I was informed that he was indebted, for his classical learning, to the reverend Mr. *S. Morton*, rector of *Haddon*, who is mentioned in the father's will. * *Item*, I desire and constitute (says the close of *Edmund's* will) my loving friends *Samuel Morton* clerk, and rector of the parish church of *Haddon*, in the county of *Huntingdon*, and also my very much respected cousin Mr. *Richard*

* *Cowper*

* *Gowper* clerk, and rector of *Long Orton* and *Buttolphs*
 * *Bridge*, in the county of *Huntingdon*, to be the over-
 * seers of this my last will and testament.'

Our author's childhood was spent in every proper part of education: in which religion was consider'd as the *unum necessarium*, and not as an accident or matter of form. This appears from *memoranda* under his own hand, or an 'Account of remarkable passages, wherein the good providence of God has more signally shewn itself towards me or mine, and for which I most heartily bless and praise his holy name.'

'When a child, I fell from a bell-rope in *Castor* church, and bruis'd my head very much: but, I thank God, I recover'd well of it.

'At six years old I was run over by a horse, but had little hurt.

'At *Warmington*, when a boy, I very narrowly escaped shooting *Robert Bond* with an arrow, which I fear might have kill'd him, had it hit him.'

These things may appear as *minutiae* to narrow and undisciplin'd souls; but they discover an infancy under the reins of discretion and the power of religion; for if these deliverances had not made a lasting impression upon him in his childhood, they scarce would have been recollected when he arrived at man's estate.

We must here leave our author, under Mr. *Morton's* instruction. For,

I have not been able to recover any thing additional concerning him, till we find him at the University of *Cambridge*: Yet I shall mention a passage out of the father's codicil to his will, signed before his son's admission in the University, which is convincing to me, that he was originally devoted to the altar, so far as parental authority could direct: 'Item, I give all my books to my eldest son *Nathanael*, if he live, and be a Master of arts, and a minister.'——And I conceive the following clause will pass for evidence that the father had a well-fraught study at that time, 'Provided, that tho' *Nathanael* be Master of Arts,

and a minister——yet if another be——he the said
 Nathanael shall give to any that shall be a minister,
 of his three brothers, either books to the value of
 twenty pounds, or twenty pounds in money to buy
 him books, at the choice of him who is to receive
 them or it.

Before the age of sixteen our author was admitted
 into the royal and much honoured foundation of *Trinity*
 college in *Cambridge*: it appears from the college
 register, that he was committed to the care of Mr. *Bain-*
brigg, 22 *March* 16⁶⁹₇₈. He was matriculated the *July*
 following: *Nath. Spinckes Coll. Trin. quadrantarius ad-*
missus in matriculam Acad. Cant. Jul. 9, 1670. This
 is copied from the public register of the University.
 In the year 1671, our author's circumstances were con-
 siderably improv'd by the death of his father; for the
 probat pass'd the seals of the prerogative court of
Canterbury 11 *Aug.* in that year. He had his father's
 collection of books intire: he had the *Warmington* estate,
 before-mention'd, with some incumbrance: he had
 one hundred pounds charged upon *Lilford*; he had be-
 queathed to him 'All that land in *Ireland* in *King's*
 'County, which is now in the possession of the heirs or
 'assigns of *Thomas Vincent*, some time alderman of
 'London, which is due to me according to a writing
 'signed by him, &c. this I give to him and his heirs
 'for ever. Item, I give (says the father's will) to
 'the said *Nathanael Spinckes*, all that fifty pounds
 'more or less, with the profits of it, that is in the
 'iron-works in *New-England*, acknowledged received
 'by *John Pocock*, then steward of the company, and
 'living then in *London*, his acquittance bearing date
 'March 19, 1645. Item, I give to the said my son
 'Nathanael, all that estate, whatsoever it be, that fall-
 'eth to me, or shall fall to me, in *New-England*, as
 'joint-heir, with *John Naylor* of *Boston* in *Lincolnshire*,
 'to *Boniface Burton* now or late of *Boston* in *New-Eng-*
 'land, my uncle and mother's brother, and only bro-
 'ther.' And besides all this, he had the fair expect-

ance of his mother's blessing, who, as she appears to be eldest daughter and coheiress of the family of the *Elmes's* aforesaid, was plentifully provided for.

This accession of fortune however did not sink or sooth him into indolence, nor buoy or blow him up into profuseness. The manure was spread upon good ground: the rich soil and sound seed promise a reward to the reaper's hand. After he had pass'd about two years and a half in *Trinity*, like many other generous plants, which take deeper root, and spread the better, merely for their removal, he was transplanted to *Jesus* college in the same university. *Nathanael Spinckes Northamptoniensis, filius Edmundi Spinckes clerici defuncti, annum agens decimum octavum, postquam per duos annos commoratus est in coll. S. Trinitatis, examinatus & approbatus, admissus est in commens. inferiores, sub tutore suo Magistro Wroe, Octobris 12, 1672. Regr. Coll. Jes.*

If we may hint at the motives which determin'd our author to change his college, I think I have heard him declare, the provision made for him by his father rendered him incapable of preferment in *Trinity* college, according to the statutes: and he seems to be farther tempted to make this exchange by the prospect of a *Rustat* scholarship; for nine days after he was adopted into *Jesus* college, the learned society bid him welcome, by chusing him upon that foundation.

Octobris 21, 1672. Nathanael Spinckes admissus est probationarius ex fundatione Tobiae Rustat Armig.

Maii 20, 1673. Jurat. & admiss. scholaris. Regr. Acad.

‘ This was for his honour; for the scholars of that foundation undergo a very strict examination, and afterwards are probationers for a year. And as these scholarships are the best, so the scholars are commonly the best in college, and so reputed,’ as my much honour'd friend the reverend Mr. *Thomas Baker*, B. D.—of *St. John's* college, observes at the foot of the registers above-mentioned. Besides I understand the examination of Mr. *Rustat's* scholars to be annual, so

long as they retain their scholarships, which is a guard against negligence, and a spur to proficiency; and the trial of their sufficiency and progress is made by no less persons than the vice-chancellor, the provost of *King's*, and the master of *Trinity* college.

Before our author took his first degree, I conceive I have heard him acknowledge that he was one of the public moderators at philosophical disputations; which office is now constantly supplied by a Master of Arts: and this bears testimony that he was remarkable for his academical, as his examination when candidate for the *Rustat* scholarship vouched for his classical, learning.

After this I find no particulars of his conduct till

Anno 167 $\frac{3}{4}$, Nathanael Spinckes, col. Jes. Art. Bac. And

His letters of ordination shew, that he was made Deacon by Dr. *Henry Compton* Bishop of *London*, in the chapel of *London house*, on the twenty-first of *May* 1676, in the first year of his translation.

Anno 1677. Nathanael Spinckes, coll. Jes. Art. Mr. Regr. Acad. So that he took his degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts regularly: but I do not know whether he had any other favours bestow'd upon him in the University. I incline to think that his fame, friends, and fortune in life, powerfully call'd him into the world very early; and his first landing was, as I conceive, at Sir *Richard Edgcomb's* of *Mount Edgcomb* in *Devonshire*, whose chaplain he was for some time; but I can't ascertain the date of his reception or stay with that worthy family.

On the twenty-second of *December* 1678, he was admitted into Priests orders by Dr. *Thomas Barlow* Bishop of *Lincoln*, in the church of *St. Margaret, Westminster*; as appears from his letters of orders. And now the city set on an hill cannot be hid: his judgment and application, assisted by his talent of memory in an uncommon degree, prepar'd the sky to dawn forth into a bright day. For

Early

Early in the following year we find our author placed at *Petersham* near *Richmond*; which I collect from this title under his own hand: ‘A Practical Exposition of the Church-Catechism, begun at *Petersham*, May 25, 1679.’ And again an year after, from an indorsement upon his Priests orders: ‘*Exhibit. in trienniali visitatione domini Georgii, Winton. Episcopi, tenta 25 Maii 1680. Rob. Chapman regr. deput.*’

I am the more circumstantial in these particulars for two reasons, which I shall briefly mention. This Exposition of the Church-Catechism, undertaken a very few months after he was in Priests orders, discovers a masterly judgment, and great extent of reading: our author appears, from this performance, as I may say, in his minority, to be an excellent classical scholar, to have digested all the *Greek* and *Latin* writers of the church, theological, critical, and historical, down to *Lactantius*, and to have extracted and realized to purpose the best of our *English* divines: A circumference which a worthy industrious man may not be able to draw at an advanced age. I intend for the common interest of religion, and in justice to our author, to make the world judge of this performance, if I can perfect it from his own papers; which hitherto I have not been so fortunate to effect.

Again, in this stage of our author, while at *Petersham*, he is made chaplain to the duke of *Lauderdale*, and, which was his great felicity at his entrance into public life, fellow-chaplain with the most learned and reverend Dr. *George Hickes*; between whom there continued, so long as life lasted, that harmony of affections, and that zeal and unity of counsels for the glory of God, and welfare of mankind, that they might be said to be *lovely and pleasant in their lives*.

Our author's gratitude to Heaven appears thro' every period of his life in strong colours; for he does not forget to say thus about 1682: ‘I had an escape in a coach, with Mrs. *Hickes* and Mrs. *Stone* on *Madams-court-hill*, when our horses ran away with us, and had

• had almost thrown the coachman out of his box, yet
 • stopped themselves in the middle of the hill.' Such
memoranda as these, like the *Jewish* phylacteries, were
 frequently in his sight: and every devout person of
 common understanding will recollect their use.

After the death of the duke of *Lauderdale*, his patron, in 1682, he seems to have made no long stay at *Petersham*; for I find him officiating at St. *Stephen's*, *Walbrook*, in *London*, 1683, 1684, 1685.

In Sept. 1685, the dean and chapter of *Petersburgh* gave our author the rectory of *Peakirk cum Glynton*, in the county of *Northampton*. The See of *Petersburgh* being then vacant, I presume the jurisdiction or spiritualities belonged to Dr. *Sancroft*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*; who consequently granted institution to our author. The barbarism, at least inaccuracy, of many of the forms of institution and other public instruments relating to ecclesiastical affairs has frequently given offence, and even been improved to banter and reproach upon some of the order. To remedy this inconvenience, and to wipe off the dust and rubbish which was settled upon them in tract of time, this great and good Archbishop, having resolv'd upon a reform, call'd in to his assistance persons of the best literature and nicest judgment in the laws, that while he was adorning the front, he might not weaken the foundation. This design I presume he compleated; and I conceive, were the public instruments in the later part of this Archbishop's time collected, they would in perspicuity, beauty, and force, excel any that ever appear'd in the Christian world. The substance of this account I receiv'd many years ago, from that worthy and very great man, in his profession especially, Sir *Richard Raines*, Judge of the Prerogative Court of *Canterbury*, who was the principal of those consulted by the Archbishop on that occasion. However, I shall need no apology for subjoining the form of our author's institution, carefully copied from the original; which at once preserves the memory of his benefactors, and may likewise

likewise be a touchstone to examine the truth of what I have advanced :

• **WILHELMUS** *Providentia Divina* Cantuarien'
 • Archiepiscopus, totius Angliæ Primas & Me-
 • tropolitanus, Ad quem omnis & omnimoda jurisdictio
 • spiritualis & ecclesiastica, quæ ad Episcopum Petri-
 • burgensem sede plena pertinuit, ipsa sede jam va-
 • cante notorie dignoscitur pertinere, Dilecto nobis in
 • Christo *Nathanaeli Spinckes* Clerico, in Artibus Ma-
 • gistro, Salutem, Gratiam, & Benedictionem. Ad
 • Rectoriam Ecclesiæ parochialis de *Peakirk cum Glyn-*
 • *ton* Dioceseos Petriburgensis nostræque Cant' pro-
 • vincia jam vacantem, Ad quam per Decanum &
 • Capitulum Ecclesiæ Cathedralis Petriburgensis, veros
 • & indubitatos (pleno jure) patronos ejusdem, nobis
 • præsentatus existis, Et primitus non solum de agno-
 • scendo Regiam supremam auctoritatem & potesta-
 • tem in causis ecclesiasticis & temporalibus, ac de refu-
 • tando, recusando, & renunciando omni & omnimodæ
 • jurisdictioni, potestati, auctoritati, & superioritati
 • foraneis, ac de fidelitate & allegiantia eidem Regiæ
 • Majestati præstandis, juxta vim, formam & effectum
 • statuti parlamenti hujus inclyti Regni Angliæ in ea
 • parte editi & provisi, necnon de legitima & canonica
 • obedientia Nobis & successoribus nostris Archiepis-
 • copis Cantuar' & Episcopis Petriburgen' pro tempore
 • existentibus in omnibus licitis & honestis per Et
 • præstanda & exhibenda, verum etiam quod, nulla
 • symoniaca conventionione seu pravitate superveniente,
 • Et ad dictam Rectoriam promoveri procurâsti, seu
 • Et sciente vel assentiente alius quispiam procuravit
 • juxta Canonem in ea parte editum & provisum ; Ad
 • sancta Dei Evangelia rite juratum admittimus, Teq;
 • Rectorem ejusdem, ac in & de eadem, cum suis juri-
 • bus, membris, & pertinentiis universis, instituimus
 • canonice & investimus, curam & regimen animarum
 • omnium parochianorum ibidem Cû in Domino
 • committentes, & committimus per præsentem, juri-
 • bus

bus Archiepiscopalibus Cant' & Episcopalibus Petriburgen' & ecclesiæ cathedralis & metropoliticae Christi Cantuar' & ecclesiæ cathedralis Petriburgen' dignitatibus & honoribus in omnibus semper salvis. In Cujus Rei Testimonium sigillum (quo in hac parte utimur) præsentibus apponi fecimus. Dat' decimo septimo die mensis Septembris Anno Domini Millesimo Sexcentesimo Octogesimo Quinto, nostræque Consecrationis anno Octavo.

Radulphus Snowe

&

Edmundus Sherman

} Registrarii.

Tbo. Pinfold, Surr.

Our author married *Dorothy*, the daughter of *William Rusland*, citizen of *London*, some time after he was rector of *Peakirk*, and before he was prebendary of *Sarum*. With her he had 1000 *l.* and the good qualities of a sensible, obliging, and industrious wife.

July 21, 1687, after the resignation of the reverend Mr. *Timothy Morton*, our author obtain'd a prebend in the church of *St. Mary Sarum*, called MAJOR PARS ALTARIS: during the indisposition of *Seth*, Bishop of that See, the institution, or investiture, is given by *Robert Woodward*, L.L.D. and vicar-general of the Bishop, afterwards dean of that church. Accordingly our author was install'd four days after, on July 25. Omnibus ad quos hoc præsens scriptum pervenerit. SCIATIS quod venerabilis vir *Nathanael Spinckes* installatus fuit Præbendarius Præbendæ MAJORIS PARS ALTARIS in ecclesiæ cathedrali beatæ *MARIÆ* virginis *Sarum*, ab antiquo fundatæ, vicesimo quinto die mensis *Julii*, anno Dom. 1687. Ita testor, *Geo. Frome*, Not' Publ', &c.

On the 24th of September 1687, our author was instituted to the rectory of *St. Martin, Sarum*, in the county of *Wilts*, by Dr. *Woodward* aforesaid; the patron who presented was *Francis Hill*, Esq; Mr. *Spinckes* seems to have been inducted October 10 following.

On

On the 27th of *September*, in the same year, he was licensed to preach, &c. at *Stratford subter Castrum*, or *Undercastle*, in the county of *Wilts*; for which he had the stipend of 80*l. per ann.* paid out of the rectory, appropriated to the dean and chapter. And he I am told was permitted to reap the profits of this curacy till the year 1702.

So far as I can form a judgment from the accounts, he receiv'd no profits from his prebend after this article from his collector: '*Memorandum*, I have collected, for Mr. *Spinckes*, 9*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.* due to him for *Pente-cost* money for the year 1690, &c.' And a very reverend and worthy member of that church is pleas'd to inform me, that Mr. *Thomas Smith's* admission was *Jan.* 20, 1690, and that he 'finds by the Bishop's [Dr. *Burnet's*] mandate to the dean and chapter, Mr. *Smith* was collated to that prebend upon the deprivation of Mr. *Spinckes* for his not taking the oaths.'

Our author's fortune, time, and study, were nevertheless employ'd in serving his fellow-creatures, and Christians: *He went about doing good.*

'*October* 11, 1704. I had a very great escape out of a mine at *Bwlchyr Eskyr byr*, when my breath was quite spent, so that I thought I should never have reached the top. Blessed be the name of God for such abundant goodness! And O that I may have a continual sense of it upon my mind! *Amen.*'

'*October* 13, 1706. My house was wonderfully preserved from burning, by my awaking about four in the morning, and smelling the scent of burning linen, which proved to be the maid's apron, that had been smothering till that time, and never broke out into a flame. And the providence of God is the more remarkable in this, that, had my wife and I lain that night in our usual bed, I had been at too great a distance, to have smelt any thing of this fire; but the washing of the room made us lie a floor higher, and so I came to make this discovery.'

' And

* And O that I may be duly sensible of the great
 * goodness of God to me and mine herein, and truly
 * thankful to him for it. *Amen.*

* *August 9, 1708.* My son *Robert* having run away;
 * with a design no more to return home, was, by the
 * goodness of God to him, struck with a sense of his
 * folly and undutifulness, and resolved, like a true
 * penitent, to confess his fault, and beg pardon for it,
 * and to promise amendment for the future; which
 * he did freely of himself, the next morning; for nei-
 * ther his mother nor I had known any thing of his
 * attempt.

* Blessed be thy Name for this, O Lord God! And
 * I most humbly beseech Thee to set home his convic-
 * tions upon him, that a due sense of them may re-
 * main upon him all his days.

* The 29th of the same month my son *William* fell
 * out of a casement two stories high, and through the
 * wonderful providence of God was taken up without
 * any considerable hurt, though lying and groaning
 * upon the pitched street; and no cloaths on him but
 * his shirt and stockings.

* Blessed and for ever praised be the name of God
 * for so miraculous a deliverance! And O that we
 * may all be unfeignedly thankful to him for it!

In this interval I find our author's circumstances
 were reduced to a low ebb; and yet he retained an
 habitual conviction upon his own mind, that, *It is more
 blessed to give than to receive.* If he had not large sums
 to cast into the treasury, yet he must throw in his mite;
 and when he could not minister to the bodily necessities
 of the saints, he turned his bounty into another channel,
 and promoted a more extensive good, in forwarding
 the publication of many excellent books, such as Dr.
Grabe's Septuagint, Mr. *Newcourt's Repertorium*, Mr.
Howel's Canons, Bishop *Potter's Clemens Alexandrinus*;
 and Dr. *Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy*. This I learn
 from short references and hints in his own hand-writing:
 The

The Feast of Ascension, being *June 3, 1713*, I have seen an instrument of this date under the seal and sign manual of *Dr. George Hickes*, there styled Suffragan Bishop of *Thetford*, and two associates, together with other proper attestations, witnessing that our author was consecrated Bishop on this day. And it was known to be *Dr. Hickes's* declared and repeated judgment, that no man understood church-discipline better, or was better qualified to be a Church-governor, than *Mr. Spinckes*.

Great regard is due to ancient and intimate friendships; and as *Mr. Spinckes* was more forward to acknowledge past obligations, than to invite fresh favours, I may be permitted to mention a very seasonable and generous benefaction of *Robert Nelson, Esq;* to our author. This worthy person, possibly apprehending that our author's condition in life was depressed by depending upon his judgment in some secular affairs, bequeathed to him by his last will one hundred pounds of a special denomination; which I conceive was paid on *Feb. 16, 1714*, with the advance of twenty-three pounds interest: which liberal supply contributed very much to make *Mr. Spinckes* easy.

• *April 21, 1719.* A glass of wine at cousin *Tatnal's*
 • going wrong, I was seized with such a fit of cough-
 • ing as strangled me, so that I fell down as dead;
 • but, blessed be God! being taken up, I soon reco-
 • ver'd my breath, and went home well. For which
 • deliverance may God be for ever praised, and may
 • I always make a right improvement of it!

• *Feb. 14, 1720.* I was cut of a fistula, of which,
 • by God's blessing, I have been well recovered.

• For this thy great and undeserved goodness I desire
 • to bless thy Name, O Lord, and to shew forth thy
 • praise. And I humbly beg, that I may have grace to
 • shew forth my unfeigned gratitude by a truly Christian
 • improvement of the addition made to my life, how
 • long or short soever it may prove. This I beg thro'
 • *Jesus Christ* our Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

• *Jan.*

‘ *Jan. 1725*. Having been seized with a powerful
 ‘ asthma, so that I thought myself upon my dying
 ‘ bed, but by the use of Dr. *Beaufort*’s prescriptions,
 ‘ and the blessing of God upon them, I recovered in
 ‘ part, so as to be able to take a journey to *Bath* and
 ‘ *Bristol*, to drink the waters there; from whence,
 ‘ blessed be God! I returned, thought to be recover’d;
 ‘ however, in a better measure of health than when I
 ‘ set out, and so continue this 7th day of *February 1725*.
 ‘ For which all praise, all glory be to God!’

But of the many fruits of his virtuous love, he only
 left behind him

Anne the wife of *Anthony Cope*, Esq; of *Great Poulte-
 ney-street*: and

William Spinckes, Esq; whose industry and abilities
 the providence of God has been pleas’d to reward with
 a plentiful fortune.

Affection mostly resembles heavy bodies; it descends
 with a centripetal force, but rarely ascends; however,
 in this instance the filial duty distinguished itself.

I saw our author dying: he died as he lived, with
 such resignation and serenity, as reminds me of, *Thanks
 be to God, who giveth us the victory, &c.*

II. We shall now take a short view of our author,
 and survey him in his writings, and intellectual capacity.
 He was ever remarkable for speaking as he thought,
 and for writing as he spoke. He purposely avoided all
 ornament and dress in his style: and this was greatly
 serviceable to him in the discharge of his ministerial
 function, and perhaps not less beneficial to his audi-
 ence in his public discourses: for having an happy
 memory, supported by a masterly judgment, he gene-
 rally preached without the trouble of reducing his
 sermons into writing: and this I have from living
 testimony, while he was lecturer and curate of *St.
 Stephen’s, Walbrook*; and from better evidence still, so
 far back as *April 18, 1679*, being *Good-Friday* that
 year: on which solemnity his sermon at *Petersham*, so
 far as he committed it to writing, consisted only of
 seven

seven short lines, or heads of his subject. He was esteemed a preacher of the first rank.

Our author had several blessings, at his entrance upon life, which may be regarded as so many instruments or ingredients necessary for the forming a considerable man. He had an habit of industry riveted in him from the beginning: he had, in all appearance, as hardy and athletic a constitution, as can fall to any man's lot: he had an useful and good collection of books in his possession, as soon as he well knew the use of books: and these animated by a good discernment and kind of intuition.

As to languages, he was a very good judge of the *Greek, Latin, Saxon, and French*; and he was moreover a proficient in the eastern tongues. He ever thought and taught, that a man's chief excellence was to appear in his proper profession: he thought it very preposterous, that the gate should have bigger dimensions than the city: he thought it preternatural and monstrous, that an excrescence should be larger than the body it adher'd to. He excell'd in biblical learning; especially in cases of conscience. He read the originals of the Scriptures with ease and understanding. He was daily conversant with the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers and councils; he thought it most unnatural to be *a stranger unto his brethren, an alien unto his mother's children*, Psal. xlix. 8. He look'd upon them as *ὀστέων*, and *σάρκεων*, as *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*: and, tho' now-and-then a prodigal, or spendthrift, or changeling, may call them by foul names, yet he knew they were the sons of God, tho' encompass'd with human infirmities. As to the *Latin* tongue, he spoke it fluently, and wrote it nervously; but he never consulted decorations. The *Saxon* tongue, I conceive, he excell'd in: he has left a Vocabulary behind him in this language, which may possibly diminish the value of all the books in that way, when this shall be introduced; at least it is worth examining. It may be impertinent to insist, that he

was a nice judge of the *French* tongue. He made a considerable progress in arithmetic, geometry, and chronology; but these he only esteem'd as helps subservient to his main design of understanding the Scriptures, *that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished; remembering that every man which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old, Matt. xiii. 52.*

When our author's talents and abilities for the public discharge of his ministry were superseded, at least put under public discouragement, he retreated peaceably, he suffered patiently; *he committed himself [and his cause] to him that judgeth righteously, 1 Pet. ii. 23.* However, he thought his talents were not to be laid up in a napkin; he is still to be found among the most industrious of the labourers: he must yet give an account of his stewardship with regard to the *depositum*: and the following catalogue of his works will witness for him, that, *having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back.*

1. Of trust in God: or a discourse concerning the duty of casting our care upon God in all our difficulties, together with an exhortation to patient suffering for righteousness, in a sermon on 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15. 1st edit. for *Walter Kettleby, Fleet-street, 1796.* 2d edit. for *Richard Sare, Holborn, 1714.*

2. The essay towards a proposal for catholic communion, &c. lately published by a (pretended) minister of the church of *England*, printed at large, and answered chapter by chapter. Whereby it appears that the author's method of reconciling the church of *England* with the church of *Rome* is fallacious, and his design impracticable. For *Richard Sare, Holborn, 1705.*

3. The new pretenders to prophecy re-examined, and their pretences shewn to be groundless and false: and Sir *R. Bulkeley* and *A. Whitro* convicted of very

foul

foul practices, in order to the carrying on their imposture. For *Richard Sare, Holborn, 1710.*

4. Mr. *Hoadley's* measures of submission to civil magistrates enquired into, and disproved. Part I. Printed for *R. Smith, and W. Taylor, 1711.*

5. Mr. *Hoadley's* measures of submission to the civil magistrate enquired into, and disproved. Part II. Wherein is shewn, that the resistance Mr. *Hoadley* has taught is contrary to scripture, and to the doctrines and practices of the primitive Christians, to the doctrine of our own church, and the laws of the land; and moreover, that it is not so necessary in order to the welfare of mankind, as he seems to imagine.—*When I consider how expressly Christ forbids his disciples to resist evil, Matt. v. 39. and that condemnation is declared the punishment of it, I am forced to cry out, Oh! what times have we fallen in, in which men dare, against the express laws of the gospel, defend that practice upon which God hath passed this condemnation! If whosoever break the least of these commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God; what shall their portion be, who teach men to break one of the greatest of these commandments, such as are the laws of peace and subjection? And what may we not look for from such teachers, who dare tax that glorious doctrine of patient suffering, as brutish and irrational; and tho' it be expressly said, 1 Pet. ii. 21. that Christ, by suffering for us, left us an example how to follow his steps? Vindication of the Church and State of Scotland. By GILBERT BURNET, professor of theology in Glasgow, now the Lord Bishop of SARUM, p. 17, 18. Printed for W. Freeman, at the Bible, near Chancery-lane, Fleet-street, and R. Wilkin, at the King's head in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1712.*

6. The sick man visited, and furnished with instructions, meditations, and prayers, suitable to his condition, for putting him in mind of his change, for supporting him under his distemper, and for preparing him for, and carrying him through, his last conflict with

with death. 1st edit. for *W. Freeman* in *Fleet-street*, 1715. 2d edit. for *W. Taylor* in *Pater-noster-row*, 1718. 3d edit. for *W. Taylor*, 1722.

7. The case truly stated; wherein the case re-stated is fully consider'd. By a member of the church of *England*. Printed for *George Straban*, at the *Golden Ball*, over-against the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1714.

8. A collection of meditations and devotions in three parts: I. Meditations on the creation. II. Meditations and devotions on the life of *Christ*. III. Daily devotions and thanksgivings. Reviewed and set forth by *Dr. Hickes*, and published by *N. S.* Printed for *D. Midwinter*, *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1717.

9. The case farther stated, between the church of *Rome* and the church of *England*, wherein the chief point about the supremacy is fully discuss'd: In a dialogue between a *Roman Catholic*, and a member of the church of *England*. For *George Straban*, near the *Royal Exchange*, 1718.

10. No sufficient reason for restoring the prayers and directions of *King Edward the Sixth's* first Liturgy. Part I. For *John Morpew*, 1718.

11. No sufficient reason for restoring the prayers and directions of *King Edward the Sixth's* first Liturgy. Part II. For *James Bettenham*, 1718.

12. No just grounds for introducing the new communion-office, or denying communion to those who cannot think themselves at liberty to reject the Liturgy of the church of *England* for its sake. In answer to a late appendix, and to the learned and reverend *Dr. Brett's* postscript. For *James Bettenham*, 1719.

13. The article of the *Romish* transubstantiation enquired into, and disproved, from sense, scripture, antiquity, and reason. For *John Hooke*, *Fleet-street*, 1719.

14. The true church of *Englandman's* companion in the closet, or a complete manual of private devotions: collected from the writings of *Archbishop Laud*, *Bishop Andrews*, *Bishop Kenn*, *Dr. Hickes*, *Mr. Kettlewell*, *Mr. Spinckes*, and other eminent divines of the church

church of *England*. By the reverend Mr. *Sam. Downes*: with a preface by the reverend Mr. *Spinckes*. For *Charles Rivington*, in *St. Paul's Church yard*, 1721.

A volume of posthumous discourses of the late reverend and learned Dr. *George Hickes*, Dean of *Worcester*. Left in the hands of, and now published by, *N. Spinckes*, M. A. Printed by *W. Bowyer*, 1726.

A collection of sermons formerly preached by the reverend *George Hickes*, D. D. *London*, printed for *John Churchill*, at the *Black-Swan* in *Pater-noster-row*, 1713. In two volumes. These were published by our author, as appears from his own preface prefix'd to the first volume immediately after the dedication.

I have reason to apprehend, that he translated some of *Ostervald's* works from *memoranda* of his making present books; and that he had made considerable progress towards a new and much more correct translation of *Dupin's* ecclesiastical history. He had the direction in the publication of the fifth and sixth volume of Dr. *South's* sermons, his ancient friend: but I can come at no certainty whether he compiled the life of Bishop *Stillingfleet*, as has been reported to me.

I am divided in my opinion by contrary testimonies, so that I cannot tell whether the two following articles belong to our author or not.

An answer to all the excuses and pretences, &c. for not coming to the holy communion; with an account of the end, &c. of it, the obligation to receive it, the way to prepare for it, and our behaviour both at and after it.

Plain instructions for the young and ignorant, in a short, &c. exposition of the church-catechism.

III. He delighted in those principles and courses which respected the universal good.

He apprehended that health was the proper season for piety or devotion, and that active acceptable obedience was to be perform'd in the day of strength, and not in the night of disease or decay.

As to temperance, he was abstemious to a degree; for I remember him in the evening of life, to abstain from all meat and drink nourishing and strong; but at the same time he thought that a man might be intoxicated with imagination, pride, or revenge, &c.

If our author had any tendency to intemperance, it was in his study. This had been the companion of his youth, and was the comfort of his age. When the taper of life began to burn dim, his regular custom was to spend fourteen or sixteen hours each day among his books, unless necessary affairs call'd him abroad. This indefatigable application I presume shorten'd life, and help'd to pull down a structure which seem'd to be rear'd for a much longer duration. His method was to come nigh no fire, having purposely covered his chimney with shelves of books. When afflictions seiz'd him, he was resigned, but not abject: he felt them without impatience, and retreated into the strong holds of religion to fortify himself against the feeble insults of the world: he looked up to his Redeemer, and knew that it was often a mark of merit to be vilely traduced by the unthinking many. *Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* was his usual weapon of defence, when he and his friends were most causelessly tax'd with popery; *when the world laid to his charge things that he knew not.* Among the unprinted treatises, which our author left behind him, there are in bulk and number against popery, twice told, more than upon all other religious subjects whatsoever. I recollect that I have heard in his company, and I think from his mouth, the destiny of Archbishop *Laud* and Dr. *Heylin*, that the one might print, and the other preach, what they pleas'd against popery, yet they were papists. Such reasoners are fit advocates for transubstantiation. The same dart comes from the same quiver still. *The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation,* hath been made a *Skibboleth* and watch-word: several of those who could not readily pronounce it, have

have been treated as deserters. And tho' this bear-skin has been fasten'd upon many of the most learned, zealous, and determined adversaries of the papists, yet I will venture to say slowly, should ever the swellings and inundations of the papacy (an heresy or nest of heresies hatcht to affront the common sense of mankind, and to proclaim war against many of the doctrines and duties of the Gospel) should they ever for our sins overwhelm us with an irresistible torrent, they will not be obtruded upon us by a *Ridley*, a *Bancroft*, a *Laud*, a *Chillingworth*, a *Bramhall*, or an *Hickes*, but by one of these *Synonyma*, a puritan, a papist with a dispensation in his fob, a protestant in masquerade.

This may by some be censur'd as a very digression: but the sailors say that a becalming at sea is dreaded as the greatest distress next to a shipwreck: I am sure the tares were sown while the husbandman slept; and if it should prove true, that the Jesuits and seminary priests in the bills of mortality are twice as many as the parish priests, it may now be question'd whether our security be not greater than our safety, since these *eagles* used to be *gathered together* where *the carcase is*.

He was a living instance, that the bonds of religion may and can surpass the ties of flesh and blood.

He never blamed the age he liv'd in, or suggested that good men had cause to repine, as if the rewards of the great and virtuous were assign'd to less worthy persons: and he indubitably was one of the most contented, because he contracted his desires as to the things of life into the narrowest bounds.

Those who resign'd or precipitated themselves into envy and malice, he truly pitied, as knowing those vices change the man into a monster, depose reason, by setting the head where the heels should stand, and drive men to renounce those principles whereon both personal safety and public good depend: in his chearful, pleasant, easy converse, he rated the revengeful as executioners, or finishers of the law.

He thought the greatest cowards were the most cruel, and that the most covetous were the most beggarly and necessitous; if we may invert the construction, as persons really *having nothing*, though *possessing all things* in the midst of their abundance.

His patience under afflictions and losses of every kind, was great, having gone thro' the trial and exercise of them for almost the space of forty years; so that I have no scruple in my own mind, but that in him *patience* had *her perfect work*. His patience under bodily pains was surprising to me. I saw him soon after he was cut for a fistula; his discourse was easy and unforced; a steady calm and composure sat on his brow, without a wrinkle or wry face: I could not forbear this soliloquy, Either his sense of pain must be abated, or he could bear pain beyond other mortals, or both: and when I saw him dying, he did not seem so much to suffer as to enjoy his death.

His meekness was such, that should we form a judgment from his carriage, it would be this, that he never met with a provocation. I knew him intimately for about eleven years, and under several severe trials of his temper, but I never saw him angry. I remember a conversation, in which Dr. Burnet was the subject, where the tide run pretty high against the Bishop; but our author, tho' he had been *before the shearer*, *open'd not his mouth*: when he was importun'd to speak his sentiments, he deliver'd himself with such authoritative sweetness and candour, that, all things consider'd, I think I never heard such amiable words proceed out of any man's mouth, and to this effect: Sir, the world says I was injured by Bishop Burnet; another man therefore may say that of him with truth and decency, which I can't speak without the suspicion of resentment. On another occasion, in the plunge of his distress, a memorable transaction rifled his purse of near twenty pounds, and likewise pursued him with other outrages which were ruinous to his circumstances. My situation was such at that time, the affair could scarce

scarce be conceal'd from me. Our author was calm and dispassionate upon the repetition of the case, and, so far as I can recollect, with his wonted complacency, thought it strange, that slander, like quicksilver in the tube, did not sink in proportion to the pressure or injury.

As for our author's christian sincerity, he spoke and liv'd as he wrote: and therefore I can't do him better justice than to refer the reader to that passage in the *SICK MAN VISITED*, where the water is not troubled with design to choak the fish.

That *they may shew how true [or upright] the Lord my strength is, and that there is no unrighteousness in him*, was frequently in his mouth, and at his heart. This was the pattern of his justice and integrity to his fellow-creatures. If he transgressed justice in any particular, I guess it was by throwing weight into the opposite scale, where he was personally concern'd. I shall transcribe here part of a letter of Mrs. *Martha Bennet*, of *Holbeach* in *Lincolnshire*, the only survivor of all his father's children. 'Among many instances of his exact justice I recollect this: My father having by his will bequeathed to me 400*l.* and charged an estate with the payment of it, which, as it afterwards appear'd, could not be done according to the strict rules of law—My brother, because he thought it my father's intention that such sums should be paid out of the estate, not only paid me the 400*l.* but all interest from the time it became due to the time of payment: and I make no question but he did the same to three more brothers, who were all alive many years after; altho', as above hinted, he needed not to have done so, the estate being vested in him as heir at law, in such manner as entirely hindered the operation of my father's will.' I have seen accounts which contain full evidence that all his brothers met with the same usage from his hand: and should the whole compass of his acquaintance and intercourse be survey'd, I dare say a single

single variation from this practice could not be produced.

Devotion or prayer appear'd to be a province in which his great strength lay, as if the blessing of the primogeniture were entailed upon this duty: *the beginning of strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.* If *the Spirit of grace and supplications* was poured forth upon any in these later days, I see no cause why it should not be ascribed to our author. I believe no man living makes a nearer approach to the strict literal observance of that direction, *Pray without ceasing*, than he did. I had frequent opportunities of certain information as to this fact. Though he was remov'd at the greatest distance from ostentation, in the performance of this or any other christian duty, yet in secret prayer he often discovered himself without design, and against inclination: for as in his ejaculations his method was to form the characters, of which they consisted, gently within himself, so being corpulent, and consequently his vessels turgid, a whisper every now-and-then escaped, by which a curious observer had a key to his thoughts, or rather an articulation of his words. He had a singular easiness in conversation, and presence of mind; but whenever there was a full pause in the conference, he habitually retreated to his beloved exercise of mental prayer. And here I may not incur the blame of omitting to refer to a place of this book, where our author recommends a description of prayer, which he seems to insinuate he got by heart in his youth, and 'had so often thought of it, and been pleas'd with it, that he was apt to think he should never forget it.' Again, as our author was frequent and fervent in his devotions, so he was no less conscientious in the matter and object of his prayers. He maintained that the christian devotions should resemble the Jewish sacrifices; no lame or blind offerings, for fear such deceivers should bring a curse upon them, and not a blessing. He thought this prevarication betray'd a wicked

wicked heart of unbelief, or that it discovered a people that erred in their heart. For this reason he openly animadverted upon the Popish corruptions in worship, as terminating their devotions on inanimate things, and mere creatures: and as false attributes or commendations are affronts, he more than hinted that the saints and angels were affronted, and the Deity despised, thereby. *This he looked upon as an heinous crime, as an iniquity to be punished by the judges.* He must be a novice or stranger to Christianity, who doubts that unjust and sacrilegious prayers are provoking in the sight of God; when the Psalmist carries the point so high as to say, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not bear me.* All unjust sacrilegious petitions therefore, which rob God of the honour due to his name, do most literally make the house of prayer a den of thieves. There can be no extenuation of their guilt who offer the unclean and the unholy. According to the Psalmist in our old version, Psal. l. 16, &c. they have no title to preach God's laws, or to take his covenant in their mouths, who hate to be reformed, who cast his words behind them. And a greater than the Psalmist hath instructed us, that we have no right to offer a gift at the altar, if our brother have aught against us, *Matt. v. 23.* God declares that he loves justice better than sacrifice; therefore the Popish sacrilegious prayers, which are prayers against justice, are worse than no prayers, or such unjust prayers are more criminal than no sacrifice. *He that turneth away his ear from bearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination, Prov. xxviii. 9.*

Our author was charitable in every sense, and in every degree. He cast his bread upon the waters: he went about doing good to the bodies and to the souls of men: he relieved the necessitous; he instructed the ignorant; he extended his bounty to those who were with him, and those who were against him, without limitation, even returning good for evil. He literally fulfilled that precept, *Matt. vi. 3. When thou doest alms,*

alms, let not thy left-hand know what thy right-hand doth: for he received with his left-hand, and distributed with his right, and out of his own substance gave away more than he was entrusted with, till *the barrel of meal wasted, and the cruse of oil failed*: and even then, by his own diligence, by his wife's industry, and the liberality of a few friends, who guess'd at his circumstances, he lived to his own content, in a reputable manner, in the opinion of the world; and was still to the very last enabled to put in practice that direction, *Freely ye have received, freely give*. I am sensible that these things are contrary to the common maxims of life, and to the dictates of flesh and blood: nay, some may say that all this while he forgot his own children, and his *father's house*; however by the marvellous providence of God, his posterity as to temporal riches are in a flourishing condition, by many degrees above what he could have treasured up for them, had he improv'd and reap'd the advantages of his education, and had he been the greatest worldling. There is still an acknowledgment indispensably due to the memory of our author on this subject; and that is, amidst this tide of his liberality, he was profuse to those he took to be of the household of faith. The world may say and think as they please. There was the court of the *Gentiles* and the *Sanctum Sanctorum* in the narrow compass of the Jewish temple: and *let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall*.

The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me, was the subject of his frequent meditation. In all passive virtue he was firm, and calm, and immoveable, but in the duties which required action he was chearful and vigorous, and zealous; especially in the ministration of his sacerdotal office. His graceful personage and agreeable manner easily gained him attention, approbation, and reverence, in the common offices of life: but when he waited at the altar, earnest-

ness

nels and zeal displayed themselves, lustre and unction triumph'd in every ecstatic and yet compos'd feature. I remember what is said of St. *Stephen*, *Acts* vi. 15. *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* In most other instances, I humbly declare myself doubtful of the representation, as commonly express'd by a glory or luminous appearance: to me that seems to derive from an uncertain and apocryphal original; and though there is no absurdity in the allusion, yet there may be credulity in the fact. There was a bodily material light in several dispensations under the Old Testament, as in the case of *Moses* and the cherubims; and likewise under the New Testament, as at our Saviour's transfiguration, and St. *Paul's* conversion; and probably there was an external splendor about St. *Stephen*; yet the representations at large, unless they denote and express the happy place to which the saints are gone before, have no manner of foundation so far as I can learn. The truth and reality may possibly be resolv'd into the astonishing make of an human countenance. This, like the rest of the composition, is *wonderfully made*: and as the face will naturally express the intenseness of pain without the aid of words or groans; as malice and rage, in defiance of philosophers and politicians, tho' silent and inarticulate, will start thro' the features, and shew the fiend; so where the whole man, when the reason, the affections, the voice and gesture, where all conspire in the worship of God, these naturally raise the countenance into an innocent, sweet, attractive, earnest, serious, and majestic joy; and that, heighten'd and temper'd by the influences and emanations of God's blessed Spirit, gives me a strong idea of an angelic countenance, or *a face as it [were or] had been, the face of an angel.* The text says of the council ἀτενίσαντες, they look'd fixedly and intensely at St. *Stephen*: tho' perhaps a visible bodily radiancy would not so probably have rais'd wonder and attention as fright and confusion.

confusion. However this be, I may be permitted to say, that our author, especially when serving at the altar, made an heavenly and angelic appearance; and, considering those ministring spirits under the most benevolent and attractive characters by which they are described to us, had at least a moral resemblance of them, in having a venerable aspect *full of grace and truth*.

Our author in his judgment was unalterably attach'd to the church of *England* in her articles, canons, rubrics, and homilies.

The following character was given of him in the public prints on the mournful occasion of his death.

August 1727. On the 28th of *July* last died the very reverend Mr. *Nathanael Spinckes*, in an advanced age, being entered upon his 74th year. He was low of stature, venerable of aspect, and exalted in his character. He had no wealth, few enemies, many friends. He was orthodox in his faith, his enemies being judges. He had uncommon learning, and superior judgment; and his exemplary life was concluded with a happy death. His patience was great, his self-denial greater, his charity still greater: tho' his temper seemed to be his cardinal virtue, (an happy conjunction of constitution and grace) having never been observ'd to fail him thro' the stage of nine-and-thirty years.

This inscription is on a white marble in the burying-ground of the parish of *St. Faith*, on the north side of *St. Paul's, London*.

11 MA 61

Deposito

Viri plane venerandi

NATHANAELIS SPINCKES, A. M.

Ortu Northamptoniensis,

Academia Cantabrigiensis,

Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Pr. dignissimi,

Amicis, patriæ, erudito orbi,

xviii Jul. MDCCXXVII

Abrepti.

Erat ille ingenio miti,

Vultu placidissimo :

Rem Christianam

Scriptis tuebatur luculentis,

Luculentiori ornabat exemplo :

Crederes antiquorum Patrum

Et mores & doctrinam

In nostrum Theologum,

Nupero quasi miraculo,

Transfusus,

Moritur

Anno ætatis Septuagesimo quarto,

Iniqua fortuna non diuturnior,

Sed major.

Proximam huic terram occupat

DOROTHEA *conjunx dilectissima :*

Quæ die a mariti interitu septima

Sociam animam efflavit.

[217]

DEPTFORD
NATHANIEL SPINCKES, A.M.

Of the Northamptonshire
County, in the County of Northampton
Baptist Minister, P. 1. 1791
Author of the "History of the
County of Northampton, from the
Norman Conquest to the Present Time."

Printed by J. Smith, at the
Printers Office, in the Strand
Near Chancery Lane
1791
LONDON
Printed by J. Smith, at the
Printers Office, in the Strand
Near Chancery Lane
1791
LONDON

16M11

Printed by J. Smith, at the
Printers Office, in the Strand
Near Chancery Lane
1791
LONDON
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Near Chancery Lane
1791
LONDON

THE
SICK MAN VISITED;

And furnished with

INSTRUCTIONS, MEDITATIONS, and
PRAYERS, suitable to his CONDITION, &c.,

Of this Life's uncertainty.

THEOPHILUS.

OH! How true is the saying of that holy man *Job*, that faithful servant of God, that noble pattern of an unwearied patience and resignation to the Divine Will? (a) *Man that is born of a woman, is of a few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* How oft do we all experiment this truth in others! And how soon may we possibly do it in ourselves! It is not two days since I saw our friend *Anchithanes*, as to all appearance, in perfect health, and as like to continue so as any I know; yet now he sends his servant for me to leave my business and come to him, because he is very sick, and apprehends himself not like to live. Such is the frailty of our present state, and the little reason we all have, to promise ourselves any long continuance in it.

This is a very sudden unexpected alteration, and a plain proof of the just cause *St. James* (b) had to compare our Life here to a *vapour that appeareth for*

(a) *Job xiv. 1, 2.*

(b) *James iv. 13.*

a little time, and then vanisheth away. Who would ever place his happiness in a state so frail, so transitory, so fickle and inconstant, were it in all other respects ever so desirable? (c) *We have here no abiding city, but are liable every moment to changes and vicissitudes, and incessant approaches towards our latter end.* How instantly is our health turned into sickness, our strength into weakness and numerous infirmities, our greatest joy into the depth of sorrow, our hope into despair, our plenty into want, our choicest comforts into disappointments, and our life itself into death! See how the rich man in St. Luke's Gospel delighted himself with the thoughts of a sure fund of pleasure and satisfaction, for a long and an easy life. It transported him to reflect upon the vast increase of his wealth, the fruitfulness of his ground, and the plentiful provision it had stored him with: so that now his chief care was how to dispose of what he had, that he might command it upon all occasions. Which having first contrived to do, his next study would be to solace himself in the enjoyment of so sure a foundation of happiness for many years together; till perhaps, worn out with old age, and a gentle decay, he should, like the patriarch (d) *Isaac, give up the ghost and die, and be gathered to his people, being old and full of days.* For so says our Saviour, (e) *He thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This I will do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* A project the generality of mankind would never blame him for! And which there are few that would not be ready to imitate in the like circumstances! And yet how speedily, and how miserably, was he disappointed! He accounted of years, *many years* to live; when, alas! poor man, he had

(c) Heb. xiii. 14. (d) Gen. xxxv. 29. (e) Luke xii. 17, 18, 19.

not

not one day, nor many hours remaining. So our Saviour acquaints us in the following words, wherein we see all his hopes dash'd at once, with the unwelcome news of his approaching end: (f) *God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* A most astonishing stroke! and which must inevitably stab him like a dagger to the heart; that when arrived at the top of his desired prosperity and happiness, he should be immediately cast down below all his fears! Oh! how sad, how disconsolate, how melancholick, how desperate, must his case be! What message to a worldly-minded man like this? As if it had been said to him, Thou vain, thoughtless creature, thus to lay thy weak designs *for many years* to come, and not remember at the same time thou art not sure of one hour thou canst call thine own! It is true, thou hast laid up goods for many years, but for whom thou knowest not; certainly not for thyself. *For even this night* thou must be called away, and so must leave them to somebody, that it may be will neither thank thee for them now, nor shew any regard to thy memory when thou art gone. So vain a thing is man! We are apt to form our projects, and contrive, and drudge, and toil for futurity; when, for aught we know to the contrary, we are upon the very brink of the grave, and ready to drop the next moment into eternity.

— *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

We carry death always about us.

Such is the weakness of our constitution, such our natural decays and infirmities, so many the diseases we are liable to, and such the multiplicity and danger of the outward accidents we are all exposed to, that it is a great vanity and stupidity to promise ourselves any long continuance here, nothing in the world being more certain than death, nor any thing more uncertain than the time of it. We know not when our

(f) Luke xii. 20.

D 2

Lord

Lord will call for us, whether *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning*. Hence our life is compared in Scripture, to things of the least stability or duration; to a (g) *ship* under sail, and an *eagle* upon the wing in pursuit after its prey; to a (h) *post* that hasteth by to a *weaver's* (i) *shuttle* for the quickness of its motion; to a *tale* (k) that is soon told; and, as I have already observed, to a (l) *vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*. And *Drexelius* justly enough sets it forth by divers such resemblances, as plainly intimate it to be of the most fitting nature that can be;

Somnus, bulla, vitrum, glacies, flos, fabula, fœnum,

Umbra, cinis, punctum, vox, sonus, aura, nihil (m).

Such as a sleep that is interrupted by any noise, a bubble that instantly disappears, a glass that is broken in a moment, the ice that necessarily dissolves upon the approach of any heat, a flower that presently dries up and falls, a story that is immediately at an end, the grass that is quickly cut down and withered into hay, a shadow that has no substance of its own, ashes blown away by every puff of wind, a point that has no extension, a voice that is no sooner heard than gone, or any other sort of sound, the air that is in perpetual motion; and as if all this were not enough to express its vanity and uncertainty, he concludes in resembling it, at last, to a mere nothing. And agreeably hereto, says *Petrarch*, and each one's experience abundantly confirms his observation (n),

Currimus ad mortem citius vel tardius omnes:

We are all of us hastening to our latter end, and one after another shall be sure to meet with it. It cannot possibly be far from any of us (o); but may be much

(g) Job ix. 26. (h) Ver. 25. (i) Ibid. vii. 6. (k) Psalm xc. 9. (l) James iv. 14. (m) *Prodrom. Ætern. c. 1. § 30.* (n) *De remed. utr. fortun. l. 1. dial. 6.* (o) *Mors, quæ propter incertos casus quotidie imminet, propter brevitatem vitæ nunquam longè potest abesse. Cic. Tuscul. Quæst. l. 1. c. 38.*

nearer to the youngest and most healthy, than they seem to imagine, or are aware of. (p) *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* Whence it nearly concerns all that have any regard for their own eternal welfare to be always upon their watch, according to that direction of our blessed Lord; (q) *Know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.* And that other admonition in St. John's (r) Revelation, *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

A surprising change indeed! so very lately healthy and strong, and now in a weak and dangerous condition! Oh the instability of this frail and mortal state! Whom would not this provoke to look about him, and be so wise as seriously to consider his latter end, that so neither sickness nor death may ever seize him unprovided for it? How ought it to banish all vice and wickedness out of the world, and excite people to a constant holiness of conversation! And how must it raise up in the minds of such, who have any remainders of compassion in them, a hearty concern for those they see or hear to lie under any such *afflictive visitation*! especially considering they know not how very soon it may be their own case, inasmuch as we have no certainty of our lives, nor indeed of our health, so much as for a day or hour. Wherefore I have a great mind to go to visit this good man, as he desires; to see how he is, and try if I can administer any comfort to him, and to remind him

(p) Job xxi. 23, 24, 25, 26. (q) Matth. xxiv. 43, 44. (r) Rev. xvi. 15.

how he ought both patiently and thankfully to submit to God's hand, and carefully to prepare himself for whatsoever may be designed for him; so that he may truly glorify God, whether it be by life or by death; and may himself be happy in whethersoever of them. But I wait, tho' with some impatience, for *Timotheus's* company, whom I am obliged to take along with me. He is a very good man, and *Anchithanes's* hearty friend, and wishes him as well as any one, and, I dare say, would rejoice in good earnest to do him any friendly office. For which *reasons* I have already sent for him, and wonder he stays so long. But hold, I see him coming, and will go meet him.—Excuse me, good *Timotheus*, that I have taken the liberty to send for you upon an unexpected occasion.

Timotheus. I rejoice to see you, *Theophilus*, in good health; and most heartily thank you for all the *civilities* and *kindnesses* I have received from you, ever since I had the honour to be known to you, and am glad of any opportunity of waiting upon you. But may I ask, Sir, why you have sent for me at this time? Is there any thing I can be so happy as to serve you in?

Theoph. Have you not heard of your friend *Anchithanes's* sudden illness?

Timoth. You surprise me to a great degree: Is my good friend, and old acquaintance, *Anchithanes* sick?

Theoph. He is sick, very sick indeed; and, by his message to me, seems to apprehend himself to be near his end.

Timoth. I am mightily concern'd at it, and must own I conceive it to be the worst news I have heard of a long time. But, as old *Eli* said, upon *Samuel's* acquainting him with God's denunciations against himself and his house, so say I in this case, (s) *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.* As every man is intirely at God's disposal, so should we all be

(s) 1 Sam. iii. 18.

ready

This Life's uncertainty.

7

ready at all times to submit to whatsoever he shall think fit in any case to lay upon us.

Theoph. We are all (*t*) in the Lord's hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter, to order us as he pleases. Let us not therefore be overmuch afflicted for what has befallen our neighbour, that we seem not to strive against that Divine Will, which we continually pray (*u*) may be done, by ourselves and all mankind, in earth as it is in heaven, and go counter to our blessed Saviour's example, who prayed to his Father a little before his crucifixion, (*w*) O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And again, (*x*) If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Timoth. But pray tell me, how long has he been thus ill? I never heard a word of it before, and am heartily sorry to hear it now.

Theoph. It is not yet two days since he was first seiz'd.

Timoth. It is much he should be so quickly weakened to such a degree as you seem to apprehend.

Theoph. Not at all, considering the mechanism of the human body, the variety of its parts, and the niceness of its contexture, which, like a clock or watch of divers motions, is easily put out of order by every accident.

Timoth. Will your occasions permit you, *Theophilus*, to give him a visit?

Theoph. It was for that purpose I sent to desire your company.

Timoth. I am ready to wait upon you whenever you please.

Theoph. Then, if you think fit, we will be going as fast as we can. You know how truly christian an act it is to visit and comfort the sick and weak. The wise son of *Sirach* invites to it, as not only a commendable, but a profitable and advantageous practice: (*y*) *Fail not to be with them that weep, and mourn with*

(*t*) Jer. xviii. 6.

(*u*) Matth. vi. 10.

(*w*) Ibid. xxvi. 39.

(*x*) Ibid. ver. 42, 44.

(*y*) Ecclus vii. 34.

them that mourn. Be not slow to visit the sick ; for that shall make thee to be beloved. And our christianity teaches us, that it is one of those duties, which being performed out of obedience to our Lord's command, is sure to be rewarded at the last day, with no less inheritance than that of the kingdom of heaven ; as whosoever pleases may see, in that awakening account our Lord himself gives us, of the final judgment to be passed upon all mankind. (x) Then shall the King say to them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. And the reason of this his favourable sentence you have in the two next verses ; (a) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; and amongst other good deeds, I was sick, and ye visited me. Not that this office was performed to our Lord himself in his own person ; but that being done to his poor sick members, he is pleas'd to interpret it, as tho' it had been done to himself. For so it follows, (b) Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Christ being our head graciously reckons all kindneesses done to any the meanest of his members, as done to himself.

Timoth. Yes, to his poor members, such as stand in need of our charity and relief, that we not barely visit them, but make some provision for the supply of their streights.

Theoph. But is this all that you take to be here intended ? The soul, you know, is of infinitely more value than the body. And you may be sure therefore, that to comfort, instruct, encourage, admonish, or any way assist a sick soul, tho' of a wealthy person, and who needs no alms from us, is at least as great a charity as can be done to the body.

Timoth. I am convinced.

Theoph. The apostle *St. Paul* also invites to this sort of charity, that we not only (c) *rejoice with them*

(x) *Matt. xxv. 34.* (a) *Ibid. ver. 35, 36.* (b) *Ibid. ver. 40.*
(c) *Rom. xii. 15, 16.*

that do rejoice; but weep also with them that weep, being of the same mind one towards another, compassionately desirous of each other's welfare, whether spiritual, or temporal, as our own. Let us go then, and visit this sick man, and administer what consolation we can to him, that he may be prevailed with to bear this his sickness with the greater patience and submission to his heavenly Father's just correction. For in truth this I take it to have been his end, in desiring me to send and to intreat your company. And this therefore I did, that we might together try, if we can be any way serviceable to him in his weak estate.

Timoth. I were not only very unkind, both to him and you, but unworthy the name of a christian, or even of a man, if I could find in my heart to refuse accompanying you, when going upon so charitable a design.

Theoph. Let us hasten then. (d) *It is better, says the preacher, to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart.* What better motive can there be to a true repentance for all our sins, and a serious and affecting consideration of what is like to become of us in a future state, than to observe a sick friend struggling with the pangs of death, and ready to expire at every gasp? It is not only a kindness to our friends, to visit and attend them in these *agonies*, and afford them the best assistance we are able in any respect, but may prove a greater to ourselves, by reminding us of our mortality, and the dreadful state of such as are forced to leave this world, before they have prepared themselves for a better. Let us therefore lose no time. And God grant we may find him well in his understanding, that however he be otherwise affected, his head and intellectuals be not disturbed.

Timoth. And that his sickness be not so violent, as to unqualify him for such discourse, as is proper for one in so declining a condition.

(d) Eccles. vii. 2.

The

10 *The more remote preparation for Death.*

The first VISIT.

The more remote preparation for Death.

Theoph. I AM glad to find you alive, good *Anchithanes*. I made haste to see you as soon as ever *Timotheus* came; but by your servant's relation I was not without some suspicion of coming too late.

Timoth. *Theophilus* affrighted me with his account of the danger, wherein you was represented to be: but I am heartily glad to find it not so bad as we imagin'd.

Anchithanes. My good friends, I unfeignedly thank you, both for your kind visit to a poor sick man, and for your compassionate concern for my welfare.

Theoph. We should be extremely to blame, if we should not be highly concern'd for the life of so dear a friend, and so singularly useful upon all accounts: but pray, good *Anchithanes*, How do you find yourself?

Anchith. I was exceedingly ill, troubled with fainting fits, in which I thought I should have died away, before I could hope to see you: but I thank God they are now over; and tho' I doubt I have got a fever, it is not yet so violent but that I am quite another creature than I was a few hours since.

Timoth. God be praised for that!

Theoph. It is a great blessing, that you have met with such an abatement of your distemper: but it is a far greater, that you have not your main work now to do, but have been long expecting the time, when you must come to languish upon a sick bed, and getting your soul into a readiness for it.

Anchith. If I had not, I must have been in a most disconsolate condition at this time. For to die, and enter upon an eternal state, is a serious matter, and of the utmost importance that can be. And to prepare aright for it, is a work of time and pains, in
which

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which we can never be too diligently employed. And yet, on the other hand, I find my head so out of order, my *spirits* so faint and low, and my *thoughts* so fluctuating and discomposed, that I am in a manner fit for nothing; but by no means fit to go thro' with so great a work, as an entrance upon a new course of life would be.

Theoph. I am sensible that a sick man has enough to take up his thoughts, upon the account of the uneasiness of his condition, and need not therefore to have deferred any work of moment till that time.

Timoth. It once affected me very nearly, to hear a good man loaded with years, and of a very infirm and broken constitution, though not then labouring under any present sickness, intreat his auditors from the pulpit to believe, what he found by certain experience, that old age, and a crazy body, were very ill qualifications for the performance of any matter of consequence and difficulty, and particularly for the great work of repentance. And I could easily believe him; and did heartily wish, that both myself, and all then present, would be invited speedily to apply ourselves to it, as being firmly persuaded, it would both deserve and require all our strength and vigour, and our most serious and undisturbed thoughts, to bring so great a change about.

Theoph. The case is so very plain, that one would think it hardly possible, for any man of common understanding, to put off his repentance a day longer. And daily experience sadly shews, that nothing is more common with the generality, even of them who call themselves christians, and profess to have their *conversation in heaven*, and to be *laying up their treasures* there, than to live as if they had no hope of a future state.

Timoth. They go on in the croud, and think to fare as well as their neighbours: and because they see their companions, and all about them, heedlessly follow their own imaginations, and tho' they own a necessity

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cessity of repenting some time or other, are yet loth to set about it; they therefore take the same destructive course, in hope that when they come to languish upon a sick bed, and are fit for nothing else, they shall have time enough to do that, which all their life long they could never be prevailed with to set about, tho' it ought to have been the business of their whole lives; till perhaps they are taken away by sudden death, and so never lie sick at all; or, if they do, their sickness proves such, as either employs all their thoughts with the acuteness of its pains, or the intenseness of its heat and thirst; or their heads are so disturbed, that they rove and wander, and are fit for nothing that is serious; but especially, not for taking a review of their past conversation, and making a judgment of themselves from it. And thus all their good purposes prove abortive, and serve to no other end, but to delude and deceive them here, and render them everlastingly miserable hereafter.

Anchith. This is a very melancholick consideration; but the fact is too evident to be denied.

Timoth. Now you find the comfort of not having been one of this inconsiderate tribe, but having taken care in time to do what now it would be out of your power to do as you ought.

Anchith. I would not have been one of them for all the world. I ever admired at the folly of such as could find in their hearts to venture their eternal state, upon the uncertainty of a late repentance, which too probably might never be at all, or at least never be such as to restore them to the favour of God, and an interest in his promises of mercy and salvation.

Theoph. You have ever acted as a wise man, but never so truly in any respect as in this; all the concerns of this present world being nothing in comparison of the inestimable felicity of that which is to come, nor any sort of tortures that can befall us here bearing any proportion to those everlasting, whereto the reprobate will be adjudged in a future state.

Anchith.

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Anchitb. I confess, and desire to do it with shame and true compunction of soul, that I have been a great sinner; tho' I thank my God, I have made it my study for the greater parr of my life, to forsake my sins, and live in the practice of the contrary virtues; relying upon God thro' Christ, for the pardon of my miscarriages, and ability to reform and amend: yet not so successfully, but that after all the care I have hitherto taken, I find I have business enough now upon my hand, in suing to God for pardon, and trimming my lamp, and fitting myself for my Lord's appearance, that I may be accepted by him at his coming. Wherefore,

A Confession of Sin.

I.

O Most holy, most glorious, and most gracious Lord God, who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his ways and live; cast an eye of pity and compassion upon thine unworthy servant, and estrange not thyself from me by reason of my undutifulness. I confess, O Lord, with the utmost shame and self-abasement, that I have highly offended thy Divine Majesty, and forfeited all pretence to thy favour. It is of thy mercy that I am not long since consumed, that thou hast not cut me off, and cast me into the furnace of fire, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore. Wherefore I desire to humble myself before thee in the most submissive manner, to lament and be heartily sorry for my sins. I have sinned against infinite love, and the most endearing expressions of kindness, against the clearest revelations of thy holy word, and the most powerful arguments for engaging me to a better obedience; and have repeated my transgressions from day to day, and from year to year. And now, Lord, what can I expect but that thine indignation should be kindled against me, and thou shouldest swear, in thy wrath, that I shall never enter into thy rest? This miserable state I have brought myself into; as I cannot otherwise reflect,
than

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than with bitterness and anguish of soul. It cuts me to the heart, to think I should have thus grossly abused thy goodness, and disobeyed thy laws. And, in a just sense of this my inexcusable folly and baseness, I now apply myself to thee by a hearty repentance; in hope that thou wilt not cast me off when I do so, but wilt extend thy kindness to me, as thou usest to do, to those that fear thy name, through thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Prayer for Pardon of Sins.

II.

OH! blessed God, I beseech thee, deal not with me according to my own weaknesses and imperfections, my neglects and omissions, my heedlessness and inadvertency, much less according to my more heinous, my wilful and deliberate, my fouler and more abominable, my open, my repeated, my habitual offences; but after the multitude of thy mercies blot out all mine iniquities. Think upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness; and for thy great name's sake, and thy dear Son's sake, be reconciled to me, as if I had never sinned against thee. If thou shouldest consider me as I am in myself, I could hope for nothing but misery and destruction: even the best of my services are pollutive and defective, and stand in great need of thy mercy and forgiveness. And my wilful and more dreadful provocations call loudly for thine indignation upon me. And what shall I say unto thee, O thou preserver of men? My own heart condemns me; my misdoings testify against me; and thou, who knowest them all much better than myself, together with their several aggravations, might justly condemn me. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy, that thou mayest be feared, and with thy Son is plenteous redemption. For his sake forgive me all my past transgressions, whether in thought, word, or deed; those I remember, and those I have forgotten; such as my conscience sadly accuses me of, and such as have escaped my notice; my sins against thee my God, against my neighbour, and against myself; pardon them all, without exception of any one amongst them,

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them, that they may neither be charged upon me to my shame and confusion here in this world, nor to my everlasting ruin in that which is to come. I have undone myself; but in thee is my help; and to thee therefore do I flee for succour. Reject me not, O Lord, in my distress, nor shut up thy bowels of compassion from me. But own me for thy son by adoption and grace, and save me from the vengeance due to my manifold provocations: whatsoever I have done that I ought not to have done, or left undone that I ought to have done, or whereinsoever I have violated thy most holy laws, wash it all away, I most humbly beseech thee, with my Saviour's blood: And look upon me as a returning prodigal, who am sincerely penitent for all my miscarriages, the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and the slips and errors, together with all the other iniquities, of my riper years. And spare me, O Lord, spare me, and of thy great goodness command deliverance for me. Deal not with me according to my sins, nor reward me after mine iniquities; but lift up the light of thy countenance upon me. Call to mind thy loving kindnesses, which have been ever of old, and visit me with thy salvation. Thou knowest my frame, and that I am but dust; and may it therefore please thee to extend thy pity to me, and receive me again into thy favour! Enter not into judgment with thy servant, who am vile earth, and a miserable sinner; but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my vileness, and truly repent me of my faults, and so make haste to help me in this world, as that I may never be condemn'd with the wicked in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another for Improvement in Goodness, and a right Preparation for a happy Death.

III.

HEAL my soul, for I have sinned against thee. And if it shall be thy good pleasure to prolong my days here upon earth, grant I may improve the time thou shalt allow me, to thy glory, and my own everlasting welfare,

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fare, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in my generation. Or if thou hast determined to remove me hence, so cleanse and purify my heart, that I may neither be ashamed to have lived, nor afraid to die; and may leave this world in a full assurance of thy favour, and may be for ever happy with thee in thy heavenly kingdom, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Timoth. I hope God will hear your devout addrestes to him, and will grant you a happy dissolution in his due time; but whether by means of this present sickness, I will not pretend to guess, tho' I wish for my own and others sake that he may not. (e) *Epaphroditus was sick, nigh unto death*: yet says St. Paul, God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. And it is to be hoped, that God may be pleased to restore you too, to the comfort of your friends, and the great benefit of your relations and dependents.

Anchithanes. His will be done. I desire intirely to resign myself to his disposal whether for life or death, trusting, thro' the merits of my blessed Redeemer, that either of them shall be for my good, according as he shall, in his infinite wisdom, decree. And if death be to seize me, as I know not but it may, whether it shall be a painful, or an easy, a lingering, or a speedy death, I chearfully submit to his determination. His will is the best and wisest will; and for this reason I desire it always may be mine too.

Theoph. Happy you that have brought yourself to such a holy frame and temper of mind? And may the Almighty vouchsafe to bestow his choicest blessings upon you; temporal and spiritual blessings, if it shall seem pleasing to him in this world; but however he dispose of you here, everlasting blessings in that which is to come! And now, *Timotheus*, let you and I learn from this noble example before us, to observe and lay seriously to heart the blessedness of having

(e) Phil. ii. 26, 27.

taken

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taken care in time to provide for eternity. There is no delight and satisfaction upon a sick bed, comparable to that of being able to say with king *Hezekiah*, (f) *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*; or with *St. Paul*, (g) *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing*. It is a singular happiness to reflect upon a life past, and see that it has been spent to God's glory, and the main design of our coming into this world; and that the good man has nothing more to do, when he finds his end drawing on, but to take an easy leave of his wonted enjoyments and friends, in order to a welcome translation into an heavenly Paradise, where shall be no more sighing, or sorrows, or grief, or fear, or pain, or sickness, or death, but all shall be most charmingly transporting, without the least mixture of any alloy, and this to all eternity.

Timoth. The different ends of the righteous and the wicked, in this respect, are a powerful motive to a timely repentance, tho' we were to carry our prospect no farther. But when hereto are added the infinitely glorious rewards promised to the one, and the intolerable and everlasting tortures and agonies that are threatened to the other, he must be beside himself that can be content to live in such a manner, as that, without a miracle of mercy, he must be irrecoverably miserable for evermore.

Anchith. It is very strange, (h) that people can allow themselves in a state of such apparent danger, and of such dreadful consequence! And yet nothing

(f) 2 Kings xx. 3.

(g) 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

(h) Non est, crede mihi, sapientis dicere, Vivam.

Sera nimis vita est crastina: vive hodie.

Martial, lib. 14 epig. 16.

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is more common, the hope of a future repentance being perhaps the most successful of all the stratagems, the grand enemy of mankind has ever yet invented, in order to their destruction. Most men are desirous to enjoy their vices here, and Heaven hereafter. And having no other way to reconcile these two sorts of desires, but by a late repentance, the bait takes readily with them, and they swallow it without considering what a terrible risque they run by it, and how intolerable a mischief it will be, if they should either have no time for such a repentance, or, having time, should be any way either incapacitated for, or diverted from, heartily setting about it, or, when they have endeavoured it, should find a short imperfect repentance, after so long a course of sin, not available to the end they designed by it.

Theoph. All delays of this kind are of a dangerous nature, and seldom fail to end in the utter ruin of the delayer. For it is great odds, (i) that he who is unwilling to repent to-day, will be as unwilling to-morrow, or whensoever he hopes to set about it. The same causes of delay will still remain; and he will find the same obstacles in his way hereafter, that he does at present. And a love of his sins, and whatever prevents his repenting now, will not be lessened, but increased and strengthened, by a longer continuance in a wicked course of life. For custom, we all know, has a strange influence, and becomes a kind of second nature, and breeds almost an invincible inclination to whatever we have long addicted ourselves to, whether in natural actions, or moral. And in truth, the longer any one defers his repentance, the less likely he is ever to undertake it with success, because those habits which he is necessarily to divest himself of, before he can have performed it, do every day take deeper and deeper root, and so are more difficultly

(i) Sed propera; nec te venturas differ in horas:
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Ovid. de Remed. Amoris, lib. 1.

plucked

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plucked up. Sin is like a bodily sickness, which is oftentimes render'd incurable, by having gain'd too great a head, before a course was attempted for its cure. And hence it necessarily follows, that the longer it is continu'd in, the more powerful it must be; and so must require a greater strength, and firmer purposes and resolutions, in order to a conquest over it. And yet, alas! he that has deferred his repentance to the last, if he shall then in good earnest set about it, will not only find himself under the power of a more inveterate habit, and a stronger bias, on the wrong side, but, which is far more considerable, he has also less ground to expect the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, without which he will never be able to perform any thing that is good. For tho' it is certain, that Almighty God delights not *(k)* in the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn from his way and live; though *(l)* he would have all men come to him, and be saved; and *(m)* is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; he has said no less on the other hand, that his *(n)* Spirit shall not always strive with man, and has threaten'd that as to him that hath shall be given, that is, to him that useth aright the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit, shall be given a greater measure of the same grace and assistance, *(o)* and he shall have more abundance; so on the contrary, *whosoever hath not*, that is, makes not a right use of it, *from him shall be taken away, even that he hath*. As much as to say, God of his great goodness will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it, and study to make a good improvement of what measure of it he bestows upon them, but will withdraw it from such as abuse his kindness, either not using his grace at all, or to a wrong purpose. And when a sinner has provok'd God thus to leave him to himself, he sadly deceives his own soul, if he imagine himself likely to effect

(k) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

(l) 1 Tim. ii. 4.

(m) 2 Pet. iii. 9.

(n) Gen. vi. 3.

(o) Matth. xiii. 12.

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in a little time, what he thought a harder task than he could find in his heart to enter upon, when his strength was greater, his time more, his sinful habits not so settled and confirmed, and his assistance greater than he can now hope for. So that there is very little reason to expect such an one should ever repent truly at the last, if he have time for it. He that is affrighted at the less burdensome task, will hardly venture upon the greater to any purpose. And if he could not be induced to amend when his sins were much fewer, and his abilities for conquering them much greater, he can scarce hope to do it as he ought, when his vices have taken deeper root, and his spirits are exhausted, and his help is gone. This I say (p) upon supposition of his having time allow'd him for this great and necessary work. But if it happen on the contrary, as it very often does, that he has no time for it, how deplorable must his case then be! He is undone beyond recovery; and nothing remains for him, but *a fearful expectation of wrath, and fiery indignation* from Almighty God. And yet every one knows this is a common case, and which frequently befalls such as put off their repentance till hereafter. (q) Death seizes them, as it did the rich man, whom we cannot too often think of, whose soul was demanded of him at a time, when he thought of nothing less, *than he did*, according to a scandalous proverb too well known amongst ourselves, *of his dying day*. (r) *His ground*, says our Saviour, *brought forth plentifully*. And he thought within himself, saying, *What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul,*

(p) Μήμνησο ἐν πόσῳ ταῦτα ἀναβάνη, καὶ ὁποσάκις προθεσμίας λαβὼν παρὰ τῶν θεῶν, ὃ καὶ αὐταῖς. Antonin. εἰς ἱαν. l. 2. n. 1.

(q) Emendationi tuæ indulgentiam promissit Deus, sed tuæ dilationi diem crastinum non promissit. Drexel. Horolog. p. 51.

(r) Luke xii. 16, 17, 18, 19.

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thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Thus he vainly promised himself a long enjoyment of what he was so pleasingly possess'd of. But I have already observ'd to you his unhappy and speedy disappointment. His project for many years was hardly fram'd, when, behold! a most disagreeable message is sent him, enough to strike him dumb, and fill his mind with the utmost confusion. (s) *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* They shall have another owner; and possibly one whom thou didst by no means design them for. (t) *So is he,* says our Saviour, *that layeth up to himself treasure upon earth, and is not rich towards God.* And so it is ordinarily with him that promises a late repentance, and will not be induced to set about it in the mean time. Such too usually experiment, to their cost, the uncertainty of their fruitless expectation; being one way or other, before they are aware of it, deprived of the season they had groundlessly promised themselves to repent in. To the same purpose also speaks St. James, taxing some in his days, with contriving business for a much longer time, than they had any reason to depend upon. (u) *Go to now,* says the Apostle, *ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* Our life is so short and uncertain, (w) that nothing is more common, than for men to be cut off in the midst of their days, and so have all their thoughts perish, all their likeliest projects,

(s) Luke xii. 20. (t) Ibid. ver. 21. (u) James iv. 13, 14.

(w) Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere.

Quem fors dierum cunque dabit, lucro

Appone ———

Horat. Od. 9.

Moriendum enim certè est, & id incertum, an eo ipso die.

Senec. de senect. c. 20.

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and best-laid designs miscarry, and all their hopes defeated. When once (x) *their breath goeth forth*, and how soon that may be God alone knows, *they turn again to their dust*, and all their expectations, their contrivances and imaginations, vanish into air. And these two considerations, that he who purposes to repent hereafter, may possibly never live to see the time he proposes to do it in; or if he do, the same impediment that obstructs his repentance now, will in all probability not be lessened, but increased, and so more like to obstruct it still; these considerations, I say, were an abundant caution to a wise man, to undertake it out of hand, whilst he is fit for it, and has time to do it in, and good reason to believe, that by God's grace he may perform it in such a manner as to be accepted by Almighty God; and so it may prove *a repentance to salvation, and that is never to be repented of.*

Timoth. These are weighty considerations, and deserve to be well attended to, by all that know they have immortal souls to save, and which must be infinitely either happy or miserable in the other state, according to the provision they shall have made for themselves, by the discharge or neglect of their duty here.

Theoph. They are so; as weighty as can be. And yet there are others not inferior to them, and which deserve a serious regard, as well as they.

Timoth. These are enough, highly to condemn the behaviour of such who act in contradiction to them, at the hazard of their eternal welfare. But since you have others yet in reserve, be pleased to let us hear them, tho' I should have thought these sufficient of themselves.

Theoph. The two chief are these: first, that he who repents at his latter end, loses the comfort of his repentance, and departs hence at great uncertainties. His repentance may possibly be such as would hold

(x) Psal. cxlvi. 4.

out

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out at all times, and under all trials; but this is more than he can assure himself of. He knows he resolves well; but so have many who are now in Hell, bewailing their folly and disobedience, in endless and remediless torments. Their resolutions were made, when their spirits were low, the temptations to their sins were weak, and when the prospect of a near eternity was before them, to awaken their minds, and put them upon reflecting what was like to become of them for ever, if they should die in their sins. Hence they fully resolved to lead a new life, if it should please God to prolong their days; and that they would never suffer themselves to gratify their unreasonable lusts and passions any more, but would always keep in mind the great account they must one day give up before our Lord's tribunal, and would make such diligent preparation for it, as that death may never seem terrible to them any more. Yet when it had pleased God to try them, and they found themselves again in health and vigour, their vices assailing them with the same insinuations as formerly, and death and hell appearing again at some distance from them; the deceitfulness of sin has prevailed against them, their good purposes have flagged, their vows and promises have been forgotten, their allurements have appeared with their usual force, their sinful companions have entic'd them, their own wicked hearts have betrayed them, their grand enemy the devil has taken care to strengthen and enflame all their evil motions and inclinations, and they have shamefully and perfidiously relaps'd into their former abominations, and have again indulged themselves in all they had so formally renounced, (y) *returning with the dog to his vomit; and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Or perhaps, (z) *the unclean spirit that went out of the man, returning, and finding his habitation empty, swept, and garnished, may have taken to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and these all entering in, and*

(y) 2 Pet. ii. 22.

(z) Matth. xii. 43, 44, 45.

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dwelling there, his last estate may have become far worse than the first. Nothing is easier than to design and promise an amendment, when a man is under a violent fear and danger, which has taken such possession of his mind, that he is not at liberty to consider the difficulty of performing the amendment he thus hastily promises. His thoughts are all employed about the necessity he is in, of endeavouring by all means possible, to avoid the dismal pit, that opens its insatiable mouth to receive him. And this prevents his duly attending to the means that are needful to this great end, and the inconveniencies and trouble that may probably be met with in the use of them. So that all his good resolutions being made only when in such a fright, and when his eyes were so fixed upon the want he had of them, that he could not allow himself to make a due inquiry into the several conflicts whereto they might expose him, no wonder if they hold out no longer, when his circumstances are quite altered, and his wonted habits press him, and his usual temptations return upon him, with a far greater strength than he had imagined. This is such a terrible disappointment to him, that he knows not how to bear up against it, but faints and falters, and falls away, in hope of another repentance when in the like unhappy state. Instances of these relapses have been so notorious, that the death-bed penitent will never be able to assure himself, he shall not be liable to the same hazard, if it please God to make the experiment. And therefore, not knowing whether all his sorrow for his sins, and his purposes and promises of a new obedience for the future, are such as will stand the test, and upon trial will *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, he must needs be in great perplexity, and full of doubts and fears, lest after all he has been able to do in this weak condition, towards the securing his eternal salvation, he should however miscarry, and *come short of the glory of God*, and have his portion at last allotted him amongst the
vessels

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vessels of wrath, that are fitted for destruction. These apprehensions must inevitably sit heavy upon the soul of one that is so late affected with a sight and sense of his sins, and the dreadful tortures due to them, and who moreover knows not whether all his sorrow, and humiliation, and repentance, be such, as would certainly produce a reformation in him, if time were allowed for it. And yet neither is this the worst of his case, though bad enough in all reason. For,

Secondly, Did he know his repentance to be such, as upon trial would answer his expectation, of producing in him quite different affections and actions, from what he had before indulged himself in, he is not so very sure, that it will be available to salvation, unless it actually do so. (a) *When the wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, we know assuredly he shall save his soul alive.* But I have never met with a like promise to him that has lived wickedly all his life, and only laments and condemns his folly, and promises an amendment, when he comes to die. God may, and I charitably hope he will, extend his pity to such as are truly convinced, though at the last gasp, of the evil of their doings, and unfeignedly resolve upon a reformation, so far as he shall enable them for it. But I am not now speaking of what God may do, but what he has told us he will do, and what we may certainly depend upon. And, to speak my mind freely and plainly, I do not know of any certainty of salvation promised, in Scripture, to such whose righteousness consists only in a fruitless resolution, that could never be reduced to practice. It is unquestionable, that no man, in his health, has any warrant to pass a judgment upon himself, by what he may be, or intends to be hereafter, but by what he has been, and is at present. And I could never find, that God has prescribed one sort of laws for those in health, and another of a very different sort, for

(a) Ezek. xviii. 27.

such

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such as languish upon a sick-bed. More may be demanded of the one than of the other, because of his ability to do more; but it will be hard to shew, that whoever desires to be saved, is not indispensably required to (b) *eschew evil, and do good*: (c) *to keep the commandments*: (d) *to do righteousness*: (e) *to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of the mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness*; and in a word, (f) *to cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God*. And this is something more than barely resolving to do well hereafter, if it be in our power. A true repentance is not only μετάνοια, a change of mind, or a sorrow for the having done amiss; but μεταμέλεια too, a care to walk more holily for the future. And where this latter part of it is wanting, there is too much reason to fear, that the other will not be sufficient without it. At least it is not so certain that it will, as that any who call themselves Christians, should venture their everlasting salvation upon it; lest at the last they meet with a dreadful disappointment, and when they have been pleasing themselves with the hopes of Heaven, and all its unconceivable felicities, should awake, to their eternal sorrow, in the never-ending flames of Hell. I do not pretend to set bounds to the divine goodness, and pardoning mercy, or to determine just how far the Almighty will extend his favour to a relenting sinner, who repents in the very agonies of death. It is enough for my purpose, and a great deal more than our modern *Clinicks* can answer, that I know of no express positive declaration in Scripture, that such shall be saved.

Timoth. But hold, *Theophilus*, you seem to run a little too fast. For pray what do you think of our Saviour's parable of the labourers hired into the vine-

(b) *Isa.* i. 16, 17. and *1 Pet.* iii. 11. (c) *Matth.* xix. 17.
 (d) *1 John* iii. 7. (e) *Ephes.* iv. 22, 23, 24. (f) *2 Cor.* vii. 1.
 6 yard,

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yard, *Matt. xx. 1. &c.* according to which, those who came in at the last hour, met with the same welcome and reward with them that had *borne the heat and burden of the day*? Is it not natural to infer from hence, that if a man turns from his sins, though ever so late, he may reasonably expect to be accepted, as a true penitent?

Theoph. By no means; as might easily be shewn upon divers accounts. For this parable was spoken upon another occasion, and without any relation to the death-bed penitent, no more being intended by it, than the calling of the *Gentiles* into the church of God: and the several hours mentioned in it were designed not to signify the several parts or stages of our lives, but the different ages of the world; and that the *Gentiles*, who were taken into the Lord's vineyard, and made members of his church, in those later days, should nevertheless enjoy equal privileges, and be put in the same state of salvation with the *Jews*, who had been God's ancient people, his *segulah*, his chosen inheritance, and were called earlier by many generations: which being the genuine and proper interpretation of the parable, as designed only to silence the clamours of the *Jews* against the admission of the rest of the world to the same benefits with themselves, every one must perceive at first sight, that the death-bed penitent can hope for no manner of advantage by it. For, if rightly understood, it is perfectly foreign to his case, and leaves him just in the same condition, as if not one word of it had ever been spoken. And yet if we should allow him to apply it to himself, to gather what encouragement he can from it, as one that is sinking is apt to lay hold upon every twig, it will stand him however in no stead. For, *first*, what these men could plead for themselves was, *that no man had bired them*. They were not called before, and so had this excuse for themselves, for their not coming in sooner: which makes a vast difference betwixt their case, and his who

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who has been called, invited, encouraged, threatened, and had all means used to reclaim him from his sins; had (g) *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, as the prophet speaks, and yet obstinately persisted in his disobedience to the last, and then hopes to make his peace, and obtain the pardon of his sins, by a few dying groans, and faint wishes, and purposes of amendment. Such an one cannot plead for himself, that none had offer'd to hire him; but, on the contrary, his own conscience will fly in his face, and severely condemn him, for having so long withstood such effectual means of grace and salvation, as had been afforded him, if he could but have been prevailed with to make a good use of them. Besides, *secondly*, these men were *labourers*; and though they had wrought but one hour, and so but a little while in comparison of those who enter'd in first, yet some pains they had taken. They had faithfully answer'd their obligation, by working from the time they were taken into the vineyard; which was all their Lord expected from them. They came in, it is true, but at the eleventh hour, because they were not hired sooner; but then they did the work of that hour, according to their covenant. Whereas he that comes not in till the twelfth hour, has no time to work; and were he ever so willing to do it, has yet no reason to promise himself any wages for doing nothing. He may be concerned, that he was not employed amongst the rest; but this gives him no title to the reward, which was intended for, and promised only to, such as did the work. Again, *lastly*, They claimed no more than was due to them by compact. For so says the householder, *ver. 7. Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive*; as much as to say, they should be sure to have their wages amongst the rest. But has the death-bed penitent any such promise made to him? If he has, let him produce it. For my part, I have already told you, I

(g) Isa. xxviii. 12.

can

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can find none made to any, but such who turn from their evil ways time enough to do some works meet for repentance. Nor could St. *Augustin* long ago, who tells us, (b) *If he that lies at the point of death, prays to be admitted to repentance, I cannot refuse to comply with him therein. But yet I must confess, if he die with such a reconciliation, I dare not be over-confident of his dying in a good condition: tho' he may think himself secure, and die with this persuasion, I dare not be secure that he is so. I can receive him to penance, but cannot tell him what the effect of it will be. And a little after, Do I say he shall be damned? I do not say it. Do I say then that he shall be saved? Not that neither. What answer then can I give? Only this, that I do not know. I presume nothing; I promise nothing; and the reason is, because I know nothing. Whereupon he subjoins this seasonable advice; Would you free yourself from all doubt? Be sure to repent whilst you are in health. For if you do thus, and, when death appears, if you moreover obtain absolution, you have just ground of security. For you repented at a time when you had it in your power to sin. Whereas if you delay your repentance till you can sin no longer, it is not you that leave your sins, but your sins leave you. Thus dubious was this eminent father, concerning the future state of such as had deferr'd their repentance to their last hour, even though they should then set themselves to make the best amends in their power. And before him St. *Cyprian* delivered it as his opinion, (i) *That such should not be admitted to the hope of communion, and the peace of the church, who did not heartily repent and bewail their offences, till they were sick, and in danger of death; because it was to be presumed, it was not a real sorrow for their sins, but the terror of their approaching end, that produced this submission; and it is not fit that he should receive comfort when he comes to die, who would not be persuaded to think of death, before it came to seize him. These were two great men in their generations; and who have been had in universal honour and esteem ever**

(b) B. Aug. Hom. 41.

(i) B. Cypr. Ep. 35. Edit. Oxon.

since.

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since. Yet I do not quote their words purely for their sakes, but because of the reason and strength of argument that is in them; it being impossible for him to prove the validity and efficacy of his repentance, how hearty soever, who does not set about it in his health and strength, and while it is in his power to gratify his worldly and carnal inclinations, if he will.

Timoth. What you have said seems to argue a greater danger, as to the invalidity of a late repentance, than I had really apprehended. For tho' I was sensible how little reason there is to expect, that such should heartily repent upon their sick bed, who had refus'd to do it in their health and strength, I made no question but those who did then all they could, that is to say, who were truly sorry for their sins, and fully resolved to reform and amend, and to lead a new life, if it should please God to restore them to their health; I made no question, I say, but these had been in a safe condition. But you have very much shaken my confidence in this point; and I begin now to think, that tho' I had always a very ill opinion of deferring repentance to the last, there is yet far more danger in such a delay than I was aware of.

Theoph. The more seriously and impartially you consider with yourself, the more diffident I am apt to think you will be, as to the efficacy of such a repentance.

Timoth. I do not know but I may. But pray, *Theophilus*, what do you say to the other instance, of the thief upon the cross, to whom our Saviour promis'd at his last hour, that he should be *that day in Paradise?* Luke xxiii. 43. This was a very late repentance, as late as could be, and yet it proved very successful, and our Saviour declares himself satisfied with it.

Anchith. I have been listening carefully to you all this while, *Theophilus*; and do readily concur with you in all you have said upon this important subject; and am clearly of your judgment, that no wise man will dare to defer his repentance, tho' it be but for one day. But yet this instance seems to lie in your way; and the

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the clearing it well, would tend very much to the confirming all you have hitherto argued.

Theoph. That is easily done. But I fear I have already over-tired you with this long harangue; especially since, tho' it be upon a weighty subject, and the consideration thereof is very fit and proper for the generality of mankind, to prepare them beforehand for the state you are now in; yet it is not so fit all our time should be spent in what is no more to the purpose of our present meeting. And indeed I have been several times ready to condemn myself, for having entered upon an argument so foreign to the business we came about; which was to discourse with you, who both are sick at present, and have repented beforehand, and whom it is therefore unreasonable to weary with a long description of what is incumbent upon others, who are in quite different circumstances, and are still obliged to the performance of that duty, which you have been performing all your life long. You are one of those, who, in our Saviour's language, (*k*) *need no repentance*, that is, as it implies in it an entrance upon a new course of life. And therefore it is not fit to trouble you with any more of what has already been too burdensome to you.

Anchitb. I confess I have lain still without interrupting you; but I assure you, it was not without lending all the attention I could, to so useful and profitable a discourse. And I must needs say, that you have entertained me to my great satisfaction. And I am so far from being uneasy at what you have argued, with so much perspicuity and strength of reason, that I heartily join in the same request, that you will proceed to satisfy *Timotheus*, concerning the thief upon the cross, and the happy success of his late repentance.

Theoph. Then with your leave, *Anchithanes*, I proceed. And, *first*, I remark, that a special regard is to be had to the time when his repentance was thus rewarded; such a time as can never happen again whilst

(*k*) Luke xv. 7.

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the world lasts. For it was at the time of our blessed Saviour's Death, when the Redeemer of the world was lift upon the cross for the atonement of our sins, and our deliverance from the heavy indignation due to them. And what wonder were it, if, at such a time as this, he should glorify himself, by a singular act of compassion, and even a miracle of mercy; such as that never was any afterwards to expect the like? When our Lord was thus stupendously exposing himself for the sake of mankind, if he did in a peculiar and extraordinary manner shew kindness to a poor penitent sinner, that addressed to him *in articulo mortis*, it will not follow, that he must do the same to all that fly to him, in every different circumstance. He that is so infinite in mercy, might very well shew an uncommon instance of it, upon so signal an occasion, without making it a standing rule for others. If a general pardon, at a prince's coming to his throne, will not infer, that no criminals are to be punished by him thenceforward thro' all his reign, no more will what was done at this time evince, that the same method is to be taken, and the same allowances to be made, thro' all succeeding generations. It well became so solemn a time as this was, to leave some illustrious monument of an unusual condescension, for the comfort and encouragement of such as shall come after. But they grossly abuse such inestimable loving-kindness, who take occasion from hence to harden themselves in their wickedness, as if they were all intitled to the like commiseration when they come to die, tho' ever so heavy laden, and so shamefully defiled, with, and enslav'd to, their sins. *Secondly*, This thief owned our Saviour in such a manner, as argu'd in him a very strong and operative faith, inasmuch as otherwise he would not have dar'd to profess his belief in him, when he saw him conflicting with such an excess of shame and pain. The hard usage our Lord then labour'd under, was enough to affright any one, not thoroughly persuaded of his Divinity, into a denial of him, like that of St.

Peter;

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Peter, rather than expose himself to all the obloquy, and reproach, and pain, and torture, that might be expected to accompany such a profession. Yet did not all this discourage this unfeigned profelyte and penitent, from venturing the utmost that could be added, to the condemnation he was now suffering under. He gave the fullest testimony that could be of his faith in *Christ*, by a free and undaunted owning of him, in the face of his persecutors; and when his disgrace and sufferings were such as had terrified his own disciples, and put them upon forsaking and denying him. 'Ο δὲ λῃστής, &c. says *St. Chrysostom* (k), *The thief, without having heard the prophets, or seen any miracles to convince him, beholding our Saviour fasten'd upon the cross, attended not to his disgrace, nor regarded his dishonour, but, looking to his divinity, brake forth into this petition: Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom: and this even whilst those who had been acquainted with the declarations of the prophets concerning him, and had seen his miracles, cried out against him, that he had a devil, and deceived the people.* Whilst our Saviour received such despiteful usage, from such as ought to have known better things, this new disciple was not dishearten'd from making an open confession of him in the face of the multitude, then assembled to see him upon the cross. *Thirdly*, We know not what sort of life he had formerly led, nor how he had behav'd himself, as to the main of his conversation. That he had been guilty of an act of robbery, is implied in the character given of him, the sentence of condemnation pass'd upon him, and his own acknowledgment, for himself and his fellow-sufferer, *That they received only the due reward of their deeds*, *St. Luke* xxiii. 41. But whether he had made a common practice of it, or had ever liv'd in any other course of known wickedness, we are not told, nor what steps he might possibly have made towards repentance, during his confinement.

(k) Εἰς Γεν. λβγ. 3.

F

Whence

34 *The more remote preparation for Death.*

Whence it manifestly follows, that our Saviour's procedure towards him can be no precedent for others to judge by, whose sins are too notorious, and bear too flagrant testimony against them, as no way worthy of the lenity and clemency they are so ready to depend upon. *Fourthly*, It does not appear, that this penitent had ever before heard of our Saviour, and the laws of his gospel, and so possibly he surrender'd himself upon the very first call; which makes so wide a distance between his case, and that of the death-bed penitent, as may justly silence the pretences of all such, to an acceptance with our Lord, at the last gasp, from this example, so very different from any thing they have to plead for themselves. And then it is most certain, *in the last place*, that this is but a single instance; all ages, from the beginning of the world, to this day, not affording another like it. And it is very unreasonable to conclude, that because our Lord was once thus wonderfully merciful, therefore he will be sure to be so as often as a sinner is unwilling to repent of his sins, whilst he can continue in them. This is a strange and a shameful presumption upon God's goodness, and which the late penitent may justly expect will leave him, at best, in a very disconsolate and dangerous condition. I do not say, that God will not pardon such, as, after a long course of wickedness, unfeignedly turn to him at the hour of death. But yet, from what I have now said, I presume I may fairly conclude, he has given us no assurance that he will do it; and in particular, that nothing of this nature can be reasonably inferr'd, from this instance of the thief upon the cross.

Timoth. I heartily thank you, good *Theophilus*, for the full and satisfactory account you have given of this instance, so often abused, to the hardening persons in their sins, in hope of a speedy admission into Heaven, when they can keep them no longer. And methinks, if your doctrine were sufficiently publish'd to the world, people would not dare to venture on so heedlessly in their impieties; which they now persuade them-

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themselves will be easily pardon'd, upon a slight repentance, when they come to die.

Theoph. This is the very height of indiscretion, or rather of folly and madness. And no one in his wits can possibly give a reason for acting thus unaccountably, nor would ever allow himself in it, did not his lusts and passions cloud his judgment, and utterly unqualify him for consulting his own safety: for if he that neglects to repent at present, knows not whether he shall have another day to do it in, or if he have, will yet have the same impediments to struggle with, and so be tempted to defer it to another time, and thence to another, and so, it may be, never repent at all: and again, suppose death should fright him into repentance, when he is just going out of the world; if he can never be sure this his repentance is such as would produce a real reformation in him, tho' time had been allow'd him; nor that it will be available to salvation, unless it actually do produce such a reformation; and if, moreover, his two main supports, of the labourers in the vineyard, and the thief upon the cross, both fail him, he has all the reason in the world to look upon himself as in the ready way to everlasting ruin, and must be a most desperate enemy to his own soul, if he resolve still to persist in it.

Anchith. This is so necessary a consequence of the foregoing doctrine, that I earnestly wish all would be constantly mindful of it, and would diligently improve it to their own advantage. I am sure those must leave themselves without all excuse, who do not. Nor is there any greater folly in the world, than the deferring of repentance, unless it be, what too frequently follows upon this, the not doing it at all.

Timoth. Besides, it is to be consider'd, that each day any one defers his repentance, he continues in his sin; and so is yet adding to his account, and treasuring up to himself new matter of grief, and sorrow, and shame, and remorse, and anguish, against his intended time of bethinking himself. And what a

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monstrous absurdity is it, for a man knowingly and wilfully to do what he is convinced beforehand must prove bitterness in the end; and if it do not consign him over to eternal misery, as there is too just reason to suspect it will, must however overwhelm his soul with confusion and terror, and be a vexation abundantly beyond all the pleasure he could ever hope for from it!

Theoph. Upon the whole it is plain, beyond all doubt, that it is every Christian's chief interest and concern, immediately, and in good earnest, to set about this weighty and necessary work, if he has hitherto neglected it; and upon the perfecting it, and rendering it as complete as may be, if he has it not now to begin. And I must therefore beg leave to recommend that excellent advice of the wise son of *Sirach*, as well deserving every one's serious attention and practice: (l) *Return unto the Lord, and forsake thy sins; make thy prayer before his face, and offend less. Turn again to the Most High, and turn away from iniquity; for he will lead thee out of darkness into the light of health; and hate thou abomination vehemently.* (m) *Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy. Humble thyself before thou be sick: and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vow in due time, and defer not until death to be justified.* (n) *Think upon the wrath that shall be at the end; and the time of vengeance, when he shall turn away his face.*

Anchitb. And this good use I beg of God that I may be able to make of it. I thank God, I have not the business of my whole life now upon my hands: yet I cannot but pray most fervently, *That God will grant me his grace to carry me through my last conflict with that patience and resignation, and will fortify my good purposes with such courage and resolution, and give me such power over all my sins, as that I may retain no manner of inclination to them, but may be always improving in*

(l) *Ecclus xvii. 25, 26.* (m) *Ibid. xviii. 20, 21, 22.* (n) *Ver. 24.*
virtue

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virtue and goodness, for the little time I have to stay here; and whensoever I shall be taken hence, may be set above the reach of all temptations, and continually employ'd in sounding forth hallelujahs to the King of Heaven; to him who was, and is, and is to come, and to Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for Strength against Temptations, and Improvement in Virtue and Goodness.

O My God, be thou merciful unto me, and help my poor endeavours to please thee. I am earnestly desirous to approve myself unto thee. But, alas! the corruption of my nature, and the weakness of my faculties, are such, that the best of my performances are all polluted and defiled. And, to my unspeakable grief, I find, that when to will is present with me, yet how to perform that which is good, I know not. Such is the wretched state wherein I am at present; and shouldest thou leave me to myself, I could never hope for an amendment. Wherefore, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and assist me with thy Spirit, which alone can carry me successfully through the great work I am engaged in. Do thou but speak the word, and thy servant shall be healed. I am a poor, feeble, impotent creature, utterly unable of myself to do what thou requirest of me. But if thou once bestow thy grace upon me, that alone will be sufficient to carry me on against all opposition, whether from men or devils, or from my own sinful and vicious inclinations. Deny me not that assistance which thou seest needful for me, to enable me to do thy will; and which, to that end, I most humbly beg of thee. Let thy strength be made visible in my weakness. And whenever thou seest me like to fall, by whatsoever sort of temptation, do thou stretch forth thy Almighty Hand, and keep me up. Let nothing ever prevail against me, and draw me aside from

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that duty thou requirest of me. But grant I may set thee, the Lord, always before my face, that in nothing I sin against thee; that I may eschew evil, and do good; may work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and give the utmost diligence for making my calling and election sure, before I shall go hence, and be no more seen; may be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as I know that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; and may daily improve in goodness, and continually advance from one degree of grace to another, till grace shall at last be consummated in everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Theoph. I pray God to hear your Prayer, and that he will give each of us grace, not only to depart from all iniquity, but to *perfect holiness in his fear*. There is an excellent *meditation* to this purpose, that I lately met with in a certain devout author, that might seem well worthy of your attention, but for the length of it; which I doubt you cannot dispense with at present.

Anchith. Yes, very well; and pray let us have it: for I am desirous to hear any thing that tends to promote so good a design.

Theoph. He (o) represents a penitent sinner bemoaning his own folly, and declaring how exceedingly miserable he must have been, had it not been for the unspeakable goodness and clemency of Almighty God towards him: ‘ There is not a moment passed, *says*
 ‘ *he*, from my coming into the world to this time,
 ‘ wherein I might not have died. Many causes, some
 ‘ of which I know, tho’ others I do not, might easily
 ‘ have wrought this effect upon me. This is a certain
 ‘ and undoubted truth. And yet how very few of
 ‘ these many moments have there been, wherein I
 ‘ could have died without being utterly lost ! For,
 ‘ alas ! how incapable have I been of dying the death
 ‘ of the righteous ? How have I wanted that repent-

(o) *La Mort des Justes, par Mons. la Placette, l. 2. c. 4.*

‘ *ance,*

‘ance, that faith, that charity, and those other virtues, without which it is not possible for me, not to be the object of the divine wrath, whether in life or death! A great part of my time has been spent in a senseless negligence: and oftentimes I have fallen into gross sins; and have not presently applied myself to God for the pardon of them; or if I have sought to him for pardon, it has been coldly and indifferently, without the sorrow and fervency which are necessarily required in order to it. And when I take a review of the most considerable stages of my life past, how little of it does there appear, of which I can say, that it has not been sullied with some habitual sin! If from the rest of my life all that be taken away, wherein my mind had entertained any resentment, or hatred, or quarrel, against any of my brethren, or wherein I have unjustly detain’d what of right belonged to him, or have been under the power of a sinful affection for this world’s goods; and have been ready to sacrifice my salvation, and my conscience, to them, by known and deliberate sins; how very small will the remainder be! And had I died in such an estate, how deplorable a case must I have now been in! I had undoubtedly been now in Hell, suffering the same tortures, with those the divine justice has condemn’d to that doleful place of punishment. How am I then indebted to the immense goodness of my Creator, for preserving me from what might so easily and naturally have befallen me! A favour that has not been granted to divers others that I have known, and than whom I have not better deserv’d it at his hand; whom I have seen taken hence either by sickness, or such unforeseen accidents as I have been suffer’d to escape. And can I ever set too high a value upon such abundant clemency and compassion? Yet to what purpose does all this kindness serve, if it do not put me upon a constant care, never to run the same danger again, whereto I have hitherto been expos’d? As I might possibly have died

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in any moment of my life past, so may I, for aught
I know to the contrary, at this present instant, or at
any time yet to come. There is no one minute of
my life, that may not be that of my Master's coming.
And can I then forbear always to behave myself so,
as that, whensoever he shall appear, he may find me
watching, and in a readiness for his reception? How
am I concerned, either to procure a peace and re-
conciliation with God, or at least to get myself as-
sured, upon good ground, that I am already in that
blessed state, and moreover to guard myself with the
utmost diligence, against whatever might endanger
the loss of so inestimable an advantage! In a word,
How am I obliged to renounce all sort of wickedness,
to cast off the love of the creatures, and give myself
intirely up to God, and make it my only study to
please and serve him! The only difficulty I observe
in resolving this, is from the power these outward
good things have got over me, and my averfeness
to the thoughts of parting with them; together
with the vain and false hope I have, of making the
interest of earth and Heaven consist together, either
by allowing the present season to the former, and
futurity to the second, or by taking pains by turns,
sometimes for the one, and sometimes for the other.
But can I stupidly suffer myself to be drawn aside by
such gross delusions? Can I, in the first place, weigh
the interests of this life, against those of the life to
come? How hard must I work, before I can let the
desire of gaining earth make me venture the loss
of Heaven, and, to enjoy a little the more pleasure
during the few moments that remain of my life here,
dare to be miserable through the vast extent of a
boundless eternity! On the other side, if I wholly
employ my present time in pursuit of the things of
this world, what assurance can I have of an oppor-
tunity hereafter, wherein to secure an interest in
Heaven? If the future season I promise myself should
never come, but death should snatch me away in the
mean

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mean time, what profit shall I have of all the trouble
I had been at in seeking after these temporal advantages? In short, how can I ever believe, that the little time I have to live, and which yet is always upon the wing, will last long enough both to settle me upon earth, and to open Heaven-gates for me? In truth it will scarce suffice for the accomplishing either of the two designs: and to attempt both at the same time, is the ready way to succeed in neither. Wherefore, supposing me once convinced in my mind, of what in reality I know not how to question, namely, that nothing is of so great concern to me as my salvation; that this is the chief and most considerable interest I ever had, or can have; it is, indeed, my only interest, before which whatever else I aim at vanishes into nothing, and may in no wise be compared with it; can I possibly think myself at liberty to run the hazard of so inestimable a prize, rather than employ all the powers I have, and all the time my Lord affords me, in the prosecution of it? See here then my grand and most important affair! See here the only lawful object of my most unwearied endeavours! To this it is I am to apply my utmost force; and I shall have reason to think myself happy beyond measure, if I can but at last attain to it. But how do I talk of force and ability, who perceive, to my sorrow, how exceeding impotent and weak I am; and how incapable I find myself of discharging the smallest matters as I ought, and that I cannot of myself conceive a good thought, so far am I from performing a truly good action! This reflection, O my God, would cast me into despair, if I did not know, that thy *Grace is sufficient for me*. I can do nothing without thy assistance, but thou canst enable me to do all things. Thou canst strengthen and support me, and perfect in me what I should in vain attempt, without thy help. Yet this is not all: for thou hast not only power enough to supply my impotence, but goodness enough too not to disdain to
dis-

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‘ display it, in favour of such as utterly distrusting
‘ themselves, place their whole affiance in thee alone.

*A Prayer for Heavenly-mindedness, and Purity
of Heart.*

‘ **T**HIS [trust in thee] is my only refuge, O my
‘ God: it is thine alone that preserves me from
‘ being totally discourag’d. I hope that thou wilt afford
‘ me such succours as thou seest necessary for me, and
‘ which I beg of thee from the bottom of my heart. Defer
‘ not, O good God, to help me, till the latter end of my
‘ life; but grant me, from this very hour, to be sensible
‘ of the saving efficacy of thy good Spirit. Root out of me
‘ that unhappy inclination I have to the earth, and its
‘ deceitful allurements. And grant I may breathe only
‘ after heavenly things, or, to speak more properly,
‘ after thee alone, who art the treasure whereby I
‘ can become rich indeed. Give me grace to love thee
‘ in the first place, and above all things, to consecrate all
‘ the motions of my heart to thee; a heart, that, having
‘ been made for none but thee, cannot stoop, without
‘ lessening itself, to any inferior objects. Seize this
‘ heart, O God, for thyself, and refuse not to place thy
‘ throne in it, and subject all its inclinations to thyself,
‘ that nothing may ever arise in it that is not according
‘ to thy will, and tends not to promote thy glory. In
‘ one word, O Lord, dispose all things in such a man-
‘ ner, as that I may live in thy fear, and die in thy
‘ favour and love. Amen.’

Timoth. Thus ought every good christian to pray.
But, *Theophilus*, I should still have a farther request to
you, were it not for fear of being over-troublesome
to *Anchithanes*, whom, I think, we ought to take pity
upon, and leave him to himself, and to his rest, after
so long an exercise of his patience. For tho’ your
discourse is both entertaining and instructive, it may
be too much for one whose spirits are low, and his
body

body disordered; and who may need therefore to be quiet.

Theoph. I wish what I have said had come up to the dignity of the subject I have been treating of, than which nothing can be of more universal concern to mankind. But, pray, what is it you would have asked farther?

Timoth. That you would have declared wherein consists the nature of that repentance, for which you have been thus earnestly arguing; that so a man may know, not only what obligation he is under to the faithful discharge of it, but likewise how he may discharge it aright.

Theoph. Your motion, I confess, were very proper, were it not unseasonable at present. For we must have a care not to trespass too far upon *Anchitbanes*, who, though he is very obliging, and will not complain of us, must needs wish within himself, that we would be going: therefore we had better forbear at present, and appoint another day to meet and settle that inquiry.

Anchitb. Pray, dear *Theophilus*, let me by no means occasion any interruption of your discourse; for I thank God I am not so ill as you may imagine. I am, and have been, very easy; and though somewhat faint, yet not to such a degree, but that I have been most agreeably entertained by you hitherto; and could be very glad to hear *Timotheus's* question well answered, that so I may pick out something for my own use.

Theoph. This will be too large a task to enter upon at present, and I must therefore intreat, that you will please to dismiss us at this time.

Anchitb. I know not how to do that: I am so desirous of your decision of that weighty point, that you can no way so far oblige me, as by granting *Timotheus* his proper and seasonable request.

Theoph. Since you have given your word, *Anchitbanes*, that this undertaking is not disagreeable to you at this time, I shall make no farther excuses, but set

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set myself to dispatch what you desire, though with all the brevity I can. Now the first thing implied in this great duty of repentance, is a sight of sin, and sorrow for it, as for the worst of all evils, and indeed the cause of all others; highly offensive to Almighty God, and infinitely destructive of our own welfare, both now in this world, and irrecoverable to all eternity in the other. It is a notorious disobedience and affront to our sovereign Lord and Creator, whose we are, and to whom all our services are due, and whose laws we cannot violate without the vilest dissimulation and undutifulness. He gave us our being, and preserves us in it; and all the good things we at any time partake of, proceed purely from his bounty to us. *In him we live, and move, and have our being*; and to him we are accountable for all our doings, and for our good or ill management of the divers talents and blessings he entrusts us with. And what can be more intolerably misbecoming, than to rise up in rebellion against such a gracious Benefactor, return him indignities and despite for all his munificence and bounty, enmity for his love, *and hatred for his good-will*? And is not the having done this, enough to make a man abhor himself in dust and ashes? How should it cover our faces with confusion, and fill our hearts with the most pungent sorrow, to think that we should ever have indulged ourselves in a course of such undutifulness to the best of lords, such intolerable disobedience to the kindest and most loving of benefactors, on whom is all our dependence, and all our hope! If we consider ourselves only as creatures made and protected by him, and who have all the reason in the world to submit to his government, every wilful and deliberate offence against him must be highly provoking: and the remembrance of every such transgression ought to stick hard upon us, and make us restless and impatient, till we shall have obtained the pardon of it. But then if we farther observe, that our good and gracious God has not only taken care of

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of our bodies, to accommodate us with the good things of this life, but has much more gloriously manifested his excessive loving-kindness towards us, in the care he has condescended to take for the welfare of our immortal souls; that he not only entered into covenant with man to make him abundantly happy upon condition of a dutiful obedience to his laws; but when all mankind *had sinned, and so come short of the glory of God*, and had justly deserved the severity of his indignation, to suffer, for their wickedness, both in this world, and in that which is to come, he out of his immense goodness commiserated our lost undone condition, and *found out a ransom for us*, when no hope of rescue any other way appeared, or could be imagin'd, by giving his own Son, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, the ever-blessed *Jesus*, to assume our nature, and be born into the world, to lead a mean and troublesome life, to be *despised and rejected of men*, flouted and derided, and at last put to death upon the cross for our redemption; that (p) *as in our first parent Adam all had died, so in him the second Adam all might be made alive*. Whosoever, I say, observes this astonishing manifestation of the divine goodness towards rebellious and sinful men, may well stand amaz'd to think, that they should ever find in their hearts to disobey a God of such abundant, such excessive pity towards us. This is the utmost height of ingratitude, as well as disobedience, and can never be sufficiently lamented, by all the tears we can shed, and sighs and groans we can send forth. Tho' we should go mourning *all the day long*; tho', with David, we should (q) *make our bed to swim, and water our couch with our tears*; tho', with Hezekiah, we should (r) *chatter like a crane or a swallow, and mourn as a dove, till our eyes should fail with looking upwards*; with Daniel, should (s) *set our face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth,*

(p) 1 Cor. xv. 22. (q) Psalm vi. 6. (r) Isaiah xxxviii. 14.
(s) Dan. ix. 3.

and

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and ashes; and, with the penitents in the antient church, should (1) put on sackcloth, and cover ourselves with ashes, and cast ourselves down in the midst of the congregation; should punish ourselves with fasting and wailing, and all sorts of mortification; should fall down to the faithful, and embrace their knees, and kiss their feet, and seek by all means possible to obtain their prayers in our behalf: should we do all this, and a thousand times more by way of penance, for our abuse of so good, so gracious a Redeemer, we could never duly bewail the heinousness of such iniquity. So that if we consider only the wickedness of our sins, and the horrid guilt contracted by them, we have all abundant cause to lament and bemoan them, and to shew forth the greatest abhorrence and detestation of them. And yet have we still more reason to do it, if hereto be added the mischievous effects of them in relation to ourselves, as they are the only means of robbing us of God's favour, and exposing us to his just indignation, and thereby of bringing down his heavy judgments upon us here in this world, and of delivering us over to his eternal vengeance in the other, to be sentenced from his presence, and the glory of his power, and be cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore, and have our part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death, and the sharpest and the most intolerable, as well as the most lasting, of all punishments. Wherefore such being the guilt, and the terrible fruit, of our sins, every one that is not wilfully blind must necessarily see, what indispensable obligations all are under, to abominate and detest them, and loath themselves because of them, and earnestly sue to the throne of grace for mercy and forgiveness, and ability to walk more holily for the future. This is the first part of repentance, a hearty sorrow for sin, and an abhorrence of it, and of ourselves because of it. The

(1) Tertul. de Pœnit. c. 9. & de Pudic. c. 5. B. Cyprian. Epist. 65. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 28.

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next is a firm and steady purpose of forsaking it. And nothing is more natural, than to resolve to flee from, and avoid, what we know to be not only bad in itself, but destructive also to all that indulge themselves in it. They whose hearts are so harden'd, and their eyes so blinded, as not to discover the evil of sin, may senselessly chuse to live in it. But all others must be self-condemned, if they do not unfeignedly resolve upon a speedy renunciation of it, and take care moreover to put such their resolution in practice. To this, common prudence, and a desire of our welfare, direct, as we would not ruin ourselves beyond recovery. The checks of our own consciences also recommend it, reprehending us for what we have done amiss, and reminding us how much it is our duty to live in the exercise of the contrary virtues. And this the Holy Scriptures from time to time inculcate with the greatest earnestness, and under the severest penalties; requiring (u) to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; (w) to cease to do evil, and learn to do well; (x) to repent and be converted, that our sins may be blotted out; (y) to cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; and, in a word, (z) to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. And, in truth, without this, all our sorrow for our sins, and the sight and sense we have of them, instead of atoning, will aggravate our guilt, and increase our condemnation, and will intitle us to the dreadful fate of that obstinately disobedient servant who knows his Master's will, but for not doing it, as he is convinced he ought, (a) shall be beaten with many stripes. The clearer apprehension any have of their sins, the more deplorable is their condition, and the greater share of torments they must expect in the other life, if they still continue in them. And this therefore is the other part of our repentance, that

(u) Tit. ii. 12. (w) Isaiah i. 16, 17. (x) Acts iii. 19.
(y) Rom. xiii. 12. (z) Acts xxvi. 20. (a) Luke xii. 47.

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to our sight of our sins, and sorrow and humiliation because of them, we add also a subsequent care to refrain from them, and walk in all respects as becomes good Christians. Without this, our repentance, how penfive and affecting soever, is nevertheless incomplete, and will never stand us in any stead.

Timoth. You have been like yourself, *Theophilus*, very kind and obliging, in giving yourself thus much trouble at my intreaty: and, which is an unequal return for it, you have hereby embolden'd me to pray a farther favour from you; which is, that you would in like manner inform me how a resolution of amendment is to be form'd, so as that it may hold out in time of temptation, and may really produce the amendment intended by it.

Theoph. This is a very pertinent inquiry, and which deserves the serious consideration of all that would repent to purpose; so as not to deceive themselves with a name to live, whilst they are dead, and useless as to the proper purposes of living; and therefore I shall make no difficulty of giving you the clearest answer I can to it. It is certain too many resolve with themselves to amend and live well, whose resolutions stand them in no stead, because not founded upon a sound bottom; either not made from a right principle, or not duly considered, together with the temptations that may arise to the contrary; whereby they are presently shaken, and so they become *like the morning cloud, and like the early dew, that goeth away*. For the cure of which mischief, we must see, that our resolutions be fix'd and well-settled, that they be our deliberate choice, and what we are fully bent upon adhering faithfully to, whatever the consequence be as to this life. They must be like that of *Joshua*, who had set his heart to serve the Lord, and had his mind so fix'd upon it, that he would constantly cleave to him, tho' none else should. For thus he bespeaks the children of *Israel*, like a faithful servant of the true God, and who was zealously desirous, that all should

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should set themselves to serve him aright, but would do it himself, though he should have none but his own family to join with him in it. (b) *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.* Or like that of Job, (c) *Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I will hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* And again of Elibu, to the same purpose, (d) *I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Where you see he resolutely declares against all known sin, *I will not offend any more*; and if he had miscarried through ignorance, and done what he ought not, he desires to be better instructed, with a promise never to offend again in the like manner. *That which I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Thus must every penitent stedfastly and positively fix his resolution of serving God sincerely and uprightly, without a reserve for any beloved vice, or any trouble or difficulty, loss or disappointment, it may bring upon him. And to this end, the following rules are to be carefully observ'd, in order to a right method of forming our resolutions, and the lasting effect and benefit of them. *First, they must be serious and hearty.* And we must not only abhor all hypocrisy, in promising what we never intend to perform; but must take care moreover, that we be not faint and indifferent in them. We must not be like St. *Augustin* in his youth, who afterwards penitently professes of himself, that

(b) Josh. xxiv. 14, 15. (c) Job xxvii. 5, 6. (d) Ibid. xxxiv. 31, 32.

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(e) *when he was young, he begg'd of God to endue him with chastity, saying, Give me chastity, but not yet; fearing to be heard in such his request, and he presently healed, whilst in truth he wanteth to have his lusts still farther satisfied, rather than extinguished;* nor like Pharaoh, (f) *who whilst God's hand lay heavy upon him, made fair promises to Moses and Aaron, that he would detain the people no longer; and perhaps he had some thoughts of doing as he said, for the present; yet did not mind to perform his promise when again at ease, but exercised his wonted severity towards them. We must rather set ourselves to imitate Zaccheus, (g) who, to shew the sincerity of his repentance, immediately offer'd to give largely to the poor, and to make a fourfold restitution to all he had wrong'd. We must (h) turn to the Lord with all our heart, and with all our soul; must deal clearly and uprightly with him, and not seek to deceive, either him or ourselves, with fair promises of what we are not much concern'd whether we perform or no; and must see to undertake nothing but what at the same time we are fully purposed to fulfil, to the utmost of our power. Which that we may do as we ought, a second rule that I would recommend in the forming our holy resolutions is, that they be built upon such foundations as will hold at all times, and in all cases. They must not be made upon any contingent particular reasons which may vary, and so may fail us; and upon the failure whereof we may be in danger of relapsing into our former evil courses. We must not renounce a sin, only because it is shameful, or disadvantageous to our temporal welfare; because so we shall be apt to be drawn into it, when it may be committed with privacy and impunity; nor only because we are sick, and apprehend ourselves like to die; because then if we recover, the main occasion of our resolution will be removed for the present, and so we*

(e) B. Aug. Confes. l. 8. c. 7. (f) Exod. viii. 8, 15, 28, 32. —ix. 28, 35. —x. 24, 27. (g) Luke xix. 8. (h) Deut. xxx. 10.

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shall be tempted to sin again, in hope of another opportunity of repenting when death shall threaten us again. If we resolve to be honest, only in hope of acquiring hereby a good reputation, and so of advancing ourselves in the world; this resolution will last no longer, if we once happen to meet with an opportunity of answering this end, by some unexpected beneficial act of knavery, that may turn to great account, and do our business at once. And so in other cases, an uncertain fallible foundation of our resolutions will be in great danger of rendering them ineffectual; at least we can never be sure it will not. And he that would acquit himself like a good christian, must seek therefore for a firmer basis whereon to ground his resolutions, which will enable them to hold out, like *a house built upon a rock*, against all the violence of wind or water: he must see, that they proceed from a true sense of the evil of sin, and the excellency and advantage of virtue and goodness, the duty he owes to his Maker, the worth of his immortal soul, the covenant he entered into at his baptism, the profession he makes of following his blessed Saviour's example, and being *holy, as he which has called him is holy*, a remembrance of God's presence always with us, and the account he will exact from each one of us at the last day, and the like. These are reasons which will hold good always, and be a defence against all kind of sin, and all temptations to it, and can be slighted by none that are seriously concerned for their own welfare, either here or hereafter. And what resolutions are thus firmly settled, but not else, may safely be relied upon, as like to answer their designs upon all occasions and trials. Besides which, a *third* rule to be observed in making our resolutions, is, *That they be made with due deliberation*, and a thorough inquiry into the nature of the duty whereto we are engaging ourselves; inasmuch as otherwise it is shrewdly to be suspected, they will not last long. We may design well in making them; but this is not

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enough,

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enough, unless we take care to make them well, I mean, upon such a thorough observation of the advantages and inconveniencies that may attend them, on the one hand, and on the other, as may prepare us for an undaunted encounter with all the opposition we may meet with in the prosecution of them. And we must therefore take the same course as he, (i) who, *intending to build a tower, sits down first, and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it; or that king, who, going to make war against another king, sitteth down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.* And indeed, if this course be not taken, no one knows to what mischiefs he shall expose himself, for want of it. For let a man resolve ever so seriously and piously, and upon ever so sound a principle, yet he may possibly be far from having resolved aright, unless his resolution be considerate, and well weighed before-hand. It is not enough to resolve upon a new life, on some sudden transport, some unusual fit of devotion, some present ill consequence he has felt of his sin; or without attending to the proper method to be taken, and means to be used, in order to a reformation: *He that thus founds his good resolutions upon heats of passion, sets his soul, as a great man speaks, (k) upon a weathercock, which every contrary blast, of humour, or interest, blows into a contrary position.* His indeliberate resolutions may light upon a wrong object, and so become unlawful; or lay upon him unnecessary impositions, and so prove a needless burden to him; or they may fail in time of trial, and so leave him in a far worse condition, than if they had never been made. 1. I say, They may light upon a wrong object, and so become unlawful. The bounds between good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, are not always so manifest and clear, but that a well-meaning man may possibly be mistaken con-

(i) Luke xiv. 28, 31.

(k) Dr. Scott's Practical Discourses, vol. I. pag. 364.

cerning them. Not only the extremities are immediately distinguished, but nearer approaches too many be easily discernible. Yet the borders of them lie so close, and the ridge that parts them is so narrow, and in some cases makes so little appearance, that a man may be apt to step over it before he is aware. And for this reason when he is to fix his choice, he had need have his eyes and thoughts about him, and observe well with himself, what course he is to take, and where he may safely fix his mark. And if he do not, he may too late find, that he has had the misfortune to embrace covetousness, instead of a prudent management; or profuseness, on the other hand, instead of a becoming hospitality; superstition, instead of true and regular devotion; revenge, instead of a just vindication of himself; disobedience to the commands of lawful authority, instead of a care for the purity of God's worship; or treason and rebellion, instead of a due regard to the safety and welfare of society. This is one reason, and a very good one, why a man should make all his resolutions of amendment, and a holy life, with a great deal of wariness and deliberation, to prevent his mistaking the nature of his duty, and that he may not be really sinning against God, whilst he takes himself to be doing him service. And another is, to avoid laying needless impositions upon himself, by obliging himself to such courses, as, if lawful, will much abridge his christian liberty, and so by that means become burdensome to him. Such are vows of celibacy, and of wilful poverty, of spending more time in retirement and devotion, than a man's circumstances can reasonably allow of; of abstinence from some particular sorts of meat or drink; or whatever lays a greater restraint upon people than is proper for them, all things considered: which might easily be avoided, by a deliberate weighing all such vows and resolutions beforehand, and examining what ground there is for them, and what inconveniencies and mischiefs may ensue

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upon them. This therefore common prudence would direct to, as a proper method for preventing such troubles and inconveniencies, as a man might otherwise run into, to the prejudice of his health, or his estate, or his liberty, either of soul or body; and might sometimes be an unforeseen occasion of exposing him to strong temptations to sin. Again, indeliberate resolutions oftentimes fail upon trial, and so leave a man in a far worse condition than if they had never been made. Such resolutions made as in the presence of Almighty God, and in order to his service, are an obligation to behave ourselves accordingly. And consequently the breach of them must be an aggravation of our sins, committed in violation of such obligation, and what all ought therefore carefully to guard against: which there is no other way of doing, that I know of, but by a diligent observance of all our resolutions, that they be made with good deliberation, and a careful inquiry into the true nature of what we make the matter of them. If this course be not constantly taken, no wonder if our resolutions often fail us when we come to try them, and should expect to see the good effect of them. For, *first*, Temptations may be stronger than we expected, and so may unhappily prevail against such as apprehended no manner of danger from them; as it happen'd in *St. Peter's* denial of his Lord. This apostle, in a great devotion to his Saviour, defies all enemies to overcome his love and duty to him; he would chuse to die with him, rather than be guilty of any want of fidelity towards him; and whatsoever trials, afflictions, and persecutions might befall him, though all the rest of the disciples should faint and sink under them, he doubted not but to be able to bear up against them. So he professes, *St. Matth. xxvi. 33. Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended;* and again, *ver. 35. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* But he had not sufficiently attended to the difficulties
that

that might arise, the adversaries that might terrify him, the unexpected assaults that might surprise him, and the dangers that might threaten him; he had not considered, that one of the high-priest's maids might know him, his own speech might discover him, and his heart hereupon might fail him. He knew in himself what love he had for his Lord and Master, but not to what inconveniencies it might expose him, and how far they might be like to prevail against him. And hence, notwithstanding all the warmth of his present passion, not many hours had passed, before he, according to our Lord's prediction, cursed and swore, and denied that he knew him. And if this blessed apostle was so easily prevailed with, to break the promise he had so lately made, what reason have we all, poor feeble creatures as we are, to guard against the like assaults, with all the diligence that may be? Here we have a pregnant instance of human frailty; which ought to convince us all, how little we are to rely upon our own strength, and how little trust is to be given to those good purposes, how sincere soever, that are taken up without a deliberate contemplation of what may probably be the effect of them. *Secondly*, We ourselves may prove weaker than we expected; and, notwithstanding our good opinion of ourselves, may become as flexible as the young man in the (1) *comedian*, all whose firmest purposes were in great danger of being perfectly frustrated by a little fawning upon him, and a few counterfeit tears. It was not *Reuben's* case alone, to be as his father *Jacob* represents him, *unstable as water*; but whosoever well observes the carriage of the rest of the world, and how readily they change their mind, upon some little alteration in their circumstances, will easily discover the generality of mankind to resemble him too nearly in this defect; and that all ought

(1) Hæc verba, mehercule, una falsa lacrymula,
Quam oculos terendo miserè vix vi expresserit,
Restinguet. — *Teren. Eunuch. Act. 1. Scene 1.*

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therefore to be very watchful over themselves, that they do not relapse into their former wickedness, before they are well sensible of their danger. Especially considering that, *thirdly*, Our present zeal may soon decay and languish, and so may leave us, in a manner, indifferent, as to the performance of what we had so eagerly resolved upon; and what we thought a perfect hatred to our sins, may in a little time discover itself to be only a sudden heat of passion, which presently wears off, and so they again insinuate themselves, as if they had never been resolved against. Hence too many, after all their confidence in their own strength, and the firmness of their good purposes, have started back in a little time; like the church of *Ephesus*, have *(m)* *lost their first love*; like the *(n)* *seed sown among the thorns*, have had all their good designs *choaked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this world*, so as to bring no fruit to perfection; or like the *Jews*, who were once so transported with zeal for our Saviour, *(o)* *that they would take him by force and make him a king*; yet not long after, were as zealously set against him, crying, *(p)* *Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him; we have no king but Cæsar*. Such fickle uncertain creatures are men when left to themselves; and so little dependence is there upon their firmest resolutions, when not built upon solid principles, and duly considered beforehand, and when not supported and assisted by the grace of God. *(q)* *Ye did run well*, says St. Paul to the *Galatians*: *Who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?* They acquitted themselves laudably, and as became good christians, at their first setting out; yet it seems, not long after, the apostle found cause to reprehend them for not continuing on their course. And thus it frequently fares with others, who having entered upon a new course, think themselves immoveably settled in it; yet, to their shame and ruin,

(m) Rev. ii. 4.

(n) Luke viii. 14.

(o) John vi. 14, 15.

(p) Ibid. xix. 15.

(q) Gal. v. 7.

are by degrees drawn off from their hasty and ill-grounded resolutions, as if, (r) *having begun in the spirit*, they could any way hope to *be made perfect by the flesh*. They resolved upon a religious life in the gross, without inquiring aright into the several duties implied in it; but, alas! when they came to be tried in the particular parts of it, this they had never thought of, and found them of a different nature from what they apprehended; one duty seems not so necessary, as they had at first conceived it to be, and another is more difficult, and will put them to a great deal more trouble and pains than they imagin'd; and hence they start back, and repent of their good resolutions, when they find greater diligence, and mortification, and self-denial, necessary in order to the execution of them, than they had expected. In a fit of religion, they resolved to cashier all their lusts, and become new men, and lead a very different life from what they had led formerly; but all this they did rashly, resolving upon they knew not what, nor what power or ability they had for the performance of it. And no one ought to think it strange, if an enterprize, thus indeliberately undertaken, were let fall afterwards, when they came to find their error; and experience taught them, that a great deal more was required of them, than they thought of when they made their resolution. They were in hope of obtaining their pardon, and reconciliation with their offended God, and so to escape the wrath to come; and this made them desirous to enter into a new covenant with him, to serve and obey him, and to do all his will; this therefore they readily agreed to, in general terms. But when they found themselves touched in the most sensible part, and that they must necessarily quit their most beloved lusts, and engage in what most directly thwarted their natural inclinations, they began to bethink themselves, and were ready to cry out with those at Capernaum, (s) *This is a hard saying; who can*

(r) Ibid. iii. 3.

(s) John vi. 60.

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hear it? Wherefore, to secure us against any such unhappy disappointment, we must be sure to take time before we fix our resolution, considering well what it is we are about to resolve upon, and what reason we have for engaging in it, weighing the arguments on both sides, and thence making such a determination, as we may reasonably conclude we shall never be able to repent of. The most serious thoughts, and most advised consultations and debates with ourselves, are little enough to form such a purpose of amendment, as may hold out in all times, and upon all occasions. But I fear I have enlarged too far upon this head.

Anchith. Very far from it, I assure you, as to myself. And I may answer for *Timotheus*, that he would not have had one word omitted of what you have said.

Timoth. I cannot but own the truth of what our good friend has undertaken for me; and shall be very thankful, if you will please to proceed in your own way, since *Anchithanes*, you hear, is still disposed to hearken to you.

Anchith. This useful and truly christian advice is a very good remedy against my distemper, and makes me pass the time much easier than I could hope to have done, if left to myself. And therefore, pray, *Theophilus*, be so kind as to add what farther directions you think proper concerning this weighty duty.

Theoph. I have hitherto observed, that all our resolutions of a holy life ought to be *serious and hearty*, settled upon a *sound and lasting principle*, and *with due deliberation*, and a *thorough consideration of what we undertake, and whether it be like to hold out or not*. And now I add, in the *fourth place*, That they must be *perfect and intire*, so as to comprehend our whole duty, and guard against all kind of sin. They must extend to, and comprehend in them, whatever Almighty God has required at our hands; and must exclude, and debar from, whatever is contrary to his most Holy Will. They

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They must be free from all by-ends, and sinister designs and aims; and must, like the Psalmist, (t) *have respect to all God's commandments*. For if we have reserve for any one sin, we cannot be said to serve God with all our heart; but know assuredly, on the other hand, that by this our single sort of offence, we are in effect guilty of a breach of the whole law. So says St. James, (u) *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. 'Tis but a small excuse, says Dr. Hammond, on the place, 'To think that this is but one transgression, and therefore not considerable: For the obedience of God's Will is required universally to all that he commands; and he that offends in one, though he keep all the rest, is guilty of the breach of that obedience, and punishable as well as if he had broken all.' All a man's zeal for some part of his duty will never denominate him holy, or capacitate him for the reward of those that are so, so long as he takes liberty to transgress in any other. It is so far from this, that since *the same power and authority of God gives sanction to all his laws*, as a late learned (w) author speaks, *It is a virtual disowning and disclaiming of that, wilfully to disobey it, and rebel against it, and openly oppose it in any case; which he does who lives in any known and wilful sin*. And he is therefore *to be accounted an enemy and traitor to Heaven, and punish'd as such, who renounces its absolute power and right to govern him in all things, and subverts the whole foundation of obedience and submission to it*. This one sin, continued in, is like (x) *the dead flies in the ointment, causing it to send forth a stinking savour*; it pollutes and vitiates all our righteousness, and makes it unacceptable to Almighty God; and so is a ready means of robbing us of our reward. Besides that, in the mean time, it estranges the Spirit of God from

(t) Psalm cxix. 6. (u) James ii. 10. (w) Dr. Pain
of Repentance, Chap. 7. Sect. 1. (x) Eccles. x. 1.

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us, subjects us to the dominion of vice, and so exposes us to other kinds of sins, gives the devil a power over us, and if not repented of, we know not how soon it may lodge us in Hell for all eternity. So that you see there is great reason for every one that would be saved, to resolve against all sorts of sins, lesser as well as greater, private as well as publick, of omission as well as commission; such as are designed to please others, as well as those intended only to please ourselves. Whatsoever sort of iniquity it be, a good Christian cannot but think himself indispensably obliged to resolve against it, as ever he would answer his most holy profession, or would be happy, either here or hereafter. None must reckon himself to have finished his work, but to have begun it only, who has renounced his sins in general, but yet retains an affection for some one darling lust or passion. Nor can that be esteemed a truly christian resolution, which is not so levell'd against all sins, as to make no allowance for any one breach of God's commandments, under whatsoever temptation, or in whatsoever circumstances. Hence therefore it follows, that, in the *fifth place*, Our resolutions must be *adequate to all times and conditions*. First, *To all times*. They must not respect futurity only, but the present time, that without any delay we (y) *make haste to keep God's commandments*. For to determine to repent hereafter, is in truth no better than to resolve to be wicked at present. It is not to forsake our sins, but to be willing to keep them, as long as we can do it with the least hope of impunity; and even to venture our immortal souls rather than part with them. This is only a device to cheat peoples consciences, and deceive themselves; and quiet their minds with a belief, that one time or other they shall certainly do, what they cannot endure to think of, and would gladly excuse themselves from, and therefore are never like to do, tho'

(y) Psal. cxix. 60.

they

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they were to live to the age of *Methuselah*. Secondly, *To all conditions.* Our resolutions must be made for the hour of temptation, and the time of trial; such as may hold in spite of the most plausible insinuations, and the most formidable attempts to the contrary. Then it is that we have the greatest use of them; and they will signify very little to us, if they fail us at such a time of need. It is an easy matter to serve God, so long as it suits with our own temper, and is agreeable to our natural inclinations, and serves to promote our secular interests and designs. But the proof of our fidelity is, when we keep close to our duty, in defiance of all the most violent opposition the tempter can raise against it. And till we have fixed our resolutions so as to prepare us for such a time of trial, they will be in apparent danger of proving like *Egypt's broken reed*, which is of no real use, no stability or strength; but (2) *if a man lean upon it, will go into his hand, and pierce it.* Sixthly, We must resolve, *not only upon the duties* to be performed by us, but upon the means necessary for the performance of them; not only against all sins, but likewise against the temptations and inducements to them. Otherwise all our resolutions are like to prove of very little advantage to us. For let a man resolve against drunkenness, this will signify little to him, unless he resolve, at the same time, against such companions as have been formerly, and are still most like to be the unhappy instruments of betraying him into it. Let another resolve against cheating, yet he will very hardly keep clear of it, unless he resolve likewise to keep out of the way of such temptations, as have rarely failed of putting him upon it. Let a third resolve against all idolatry; yet, unless he shall call to mind, to what barbarities such a resolution may not improbably expose him, and resolve to bear them all, rather than part with his integrity; there is

(2) *Isa. xxxvi. 6.*

little

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little reason to hope a general resolution will carry him through them. In short, a man may as well resolve to be learned without reading, to acquire an estate without sobriety and industry, to be healthful without observing any of the rules that may conduce to make him so, or safe without keeping out of the way of danger and harm; as to be good, and holy, and religious, without resolving in like manner upon the proper helps and instruments of virtue, religion, and holiness. *Seventhly*, and lastly, That our resolutions may prove effectual to the good ends for which they are designed, another requisite is, that *we faithfully and diligently apply ourselves to put them in practice.* It is by no means enough to have resolved well, nor will ever prove of any advantage to us, unless we be mindful to live well too. *The only way*, (a) as a great man speaks, *to recover ourselves to a christian temper of mind, after a vicious course of life, is in truth the very same, by which a man recovers his health after a long disease, viz. by God's blessing upon the diligent use of fit means; and any other way is no more now to be expected, than prophecy and miracles.* Thus I have instanced, in the several ingredients, that go to the making up a truly christian resolution of serving God, as the Gospel requires; and have observed, that they are not to be counterfeit and hypocritical, nor loose and indifferent, but serious and hearty; are to be upon a firm and solid principle, that may make them like a house built upon a rock, immoveable, and not to be shaken with wind or tide; and not hasty or inconsiderate, but upon mature deliberation, and a thorough inquiry into the divers inconveniencies and difficulties that may occur, in the performance of them; that they are to be perfect and intire, so as to take in the whole of our duty, and provide against all kinds of sin; and suited to all times and states, so as to hold out in whatever circumstances; and are

(a) Dr. Calamy, Sermon 10. p. 347.

there-

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therefore to reach to, not only the duties requir'd, but the means too, that are necessary in order to the discharge of them; and, in the last place, that we are not to acquiesce in resolving, but must vigorously set ourselves, and use our utmost diligence and application, to reduce our resolutions to practice, that so we may see those happy fruits and effects of them, without which, they will be of no use to any of us, nor serve to any other purpose, than to heighten our guilt, and add to our condemnation. And now I shall only beg your farther patience, till I briefly subjoin these three following directions, in order to the better success of such our resolutions: *First*, That they be repeated and renewed day by day; because this will fix them in our minds, and increase the danger of departing from them; and so will make us the more diligently observant of them, that they prove not an occasion of our heavier destruction. Next, That they be presently made known to the world, so as that it may appear we are not ashamed to own, to all we converse with, that we are become a different sort of men from what we had been formerly. This will be an especial means of making us the more observant of them, lest otherwise we become a scorn and derision to those, to whom we made this declaration, who will be apt to triumph over us, and mock and laugh at us, if they see us give back again, after proceeding thus far towards a reformation; and will besides be a singular preservative against the assaults of others, who will not be so forward to entice us to any kind of sin, when they are fully inform'd beforehand, that their attempts will be in vain, and that we have already declar'd against giving ear to them. And again, *thirdly*, That we do not trust to our own strength for the performance of them, but earnestly sue to God for his grace and assistance, that having *begun so good a work in us, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Without the help

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help of his Holy Spirit, we shall soon flag and falter, and can never hope for success in what we so vainly attempt through our own power. And we must therefore be sure at all times to look up to him, and depend upon his strength, for carrying us through all difficulties and trials. And so, but not otherwise, if we use our own hearty endeavours, and be continually upon our watch, we may promise ourselves, that our good purposes shall not fail us, but that we shall find the happy effect of them, to our joy and comfort here, and our eternal salvation in the other world.

Timoth. I thank you, good *Theophilus*, for the pains you have so long together taken for my information; and I faithfully promise, I will endeavour to make the best use I can of your good instructions, for the benefit both of myself and others. Though, I thank God, I have never allowed myself in the practice of any known vice, as considering how highly displeasing that is to Almighty God, what horrid ingratitude it argues to our blessed Saviour, who has done and suffered so much for me; what an affront it is to the Holy Spirit of God, what a contradiction to our own reason, and especially to the covenant I enter'd into at my baptism, and which I have made profession of carefully and conscientiously observing ever since; of what mischievous consequence it would be at present, and how intolerably destructive hereafter; yet have I not had such a constant sense of religion upon my mind, nor been so diligent and industrious in the ways of holiness, as I am sensible I ought to have been. But, by the grace of God, I will become more watchful for the future, not only to abstain from evil, but to do good; to serve and worship God, and promote his honour, according to my abilities and opportunities; to improve my own mind, that I may more readily run the way of his commandments; and to do what service I can to my neighbours and acquaintance. This is my fixed purpose and resolution: and that I may faithfully put it in execution,

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**A Prayer for Grace to fulfil our good Purposes
and Resolutions.**

O Gracious God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; infuse, I beseech thee, such a measure of grace into my heart, as that I may spend the remainder of my days in thy service, and to thy glory. Confirm and strengthen my good resolutions, and fix them more and more in my mind, that they may be always before me, and may be a means of quickening my diligence, and making me vigorous and unwearied in thy service. I am thine by creation, by redemption, and by a voluntary dedication of myself to thee; suffer me not to be remiss and negligent in answering such weighty obligations. But as I have sworn, so let it be my daily study, and the great and chief endeavour of my life to perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. Let a consideration of the great work I have upon my hands, and the little time I have to do it in, and withal, that this little time may possibly be much less than I imagine it to be; let these thoughts, I beseech thee, have their proper influence upon me, and not suffer me one day longer to forbear fulfilling all the good purposes thou hast begotten in me; that, without any delay, I may set myself to make the best amends I shall be able, for my past miscarriages, by becoming so much the more circumspect, and the more desirous to please thee for the future. Whilst I live in the world, preserve me from the snares and temptations of it; and enable me to perfect holiness in thy fear, that I may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called, and be fruitful in all good works; and whatever shall become of me here, I may make sure of a happy eternity with thee hereafter, in the highest Heavens, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Theoph. You appear, *Timotheus*, to be truly affected with what has been said. I beseech the Almighty to convince you more and more, not only of the necessity,

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sity, but of the great weight and usefulness of a speedy and hearty resolution of serving God in all respects. But give me leave to tell you, that you seem not sufficiently to have attended to what I have said, concerning the deliberation required, in order to a prudent and truly religious resolution.

Timoth. This kind admonition is an addition to your other favours; and so I take it; tho' I am to acquaint you, *Theophilus*, that I am not now to begin this consideration, but have already applied myself to it over and over, only that I have not been so strictly observant of all my good resolutions, as I hope I shall be henceforward, by the grace of God enabling me.

Theoph. May the good God strengthen and assist all your good purposes, to his own glory, and the salvation of your precious and immortal soul! But we have trespassed too far upon *Anchithanes*, and it is high time now that we leave him to take his rest.

Anchith. I return you a thousand thanks, dear *Theophilus*, for this obliging entertainment, and beg as much more of it, as your occasions will permit. It is both delightful and profitable, and for which I shall be always indebted to you.

Theoph. Dear *Anchithanes*, I heartily wish you a good night, humbly beseeching Almighty God, that I may find your health re-established when I see you next; which, God willing, shall be very speedily.

Timoth. I pray God send you a good night, and better health, if it be his blessed will.

The End of the First VISIT.

The Second VISIT.

Of Patience under Sickness, and other Afflictions.

Theoph. I Have not heard of *Anchithanes* since *Tuesday*, and will therefore go, and make him a visit, and see how he is. But who are those I observe coming this way? I see now they are two very good neighbours and friends. I will speak to them first; perhaps they may give me some account of him. My good friends, I am glad to meet you, and I hope yourselves and your families are all well.

Eusebius. I thank you, Sir, for your inquiry; blessed be God, we are all well, and at your service. But have you heard the news of our good friend *Anchithanes*?

Theoph. I saw him some days since; and thought him in no dangerous condition: and I have heard, since that, he was better; but for these two or three days last past, I have heard nothing of him: for which reason, I was going now to see how he is.

Euseb. If you will give us leave, we will wait upon you to him.

Theoph. With all my heart, gentlemen.

Euseb. I pray God we may find him better than I expect. For our friend here, *Philogeiton*, brings but an uncomfortable account of him.

Theoph. Have you seen him to-day, Sir?

Philogeiton. No, Sir; but I met his servant, who told me, he was in a high fever, and exceeding uneasy.

Theoph. I am very sorry to hear it. And, if you please, we will lose no time.

Euseb. We are ready to attend you, Sir, as soon as you please.

Philog. With all my heart, Sir.

Theoph. See yonder! his windows are all ſhut; which is but a bad ſign, and makes me fear your information is too true.

Philog. I doubt you will find it ſo.

Theoph. The door I ſee is open, and perhaps you may not know the way; and therefore, that we may ſpend no time in ceremony, if you will excuſe me, I will lead you in to him. But hark! what melancholick doleful noiſe is that I hear?

Euseb. It is *Anchithanes* bemoaning himſelf.

Theoph. I perceive now it is his voice. He ſeems to be deſperately ill; the Lord help him! I cannot but greatly commiſerate his painful condition. Yet that which grieves me more, is to hear ſo good a Man, thus ſadly diſcompoſed, thus uneaſy and impatient under the burden Almighty God has thought fit to lay upon him. But why do we forbear to go in, and try to comfort him under his pains? Let us not ſtay: And may the Father of mercies, and God of all conſolations, of his infinite mercy, go with us, to bleſs and proſper our well-meant endeavours!

Philog. Amen. Amen.

Euseb. Here his ſervant comes, who will tell us, whether we can go in now.

Theoph. We are ſorry to hear your maſter make ſuch ſad complaint.

Servant. He is very ſick at preſent; but we hope the violence of his fit abates, and that he will be eaſier in a while. Will you pleaſe, gentlemen, to walk up to him?

Euseb. We came for that purpoſe.

Serv. He's this way.

Anchith. (a) *Wo is me, my mother, that thou haſt borne me! Alas! (b) Why died I not in the birth? Why did I not give up the ghoſt when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I ſhould ſuck? For now had I lain ſtill, and been quiet; I ſhould have ſlept, then had I been at reſt. Oh! the grave,*

(a) Jer. xv. 10.

(b) Job ii. 11, 12, 13.

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the grave, the place of quietness and ease! (c) *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest: there the prisoners rest together, they bear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul? which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it, more than for hid treasures: which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave. You all see my woful disconsolate state; and I am quite tired and spent with it. (d) My sighing comes before I eat; and my roarings are poured out like the waters.——*

Theoph. My dear friend, why so impatient? No doubt your disease is heavy upon you; yet you ought to remember by whom it is sent, and what intire resignation you owe to his will, and what ready submission all his determinations require at your hands. It was God that gave you your life and breath, and all the good things you ever enjoy'd; and he may recal them whensoever he pleases. He may put an end to your life this very moment. Or if he chuse rather to prolong your days, he may cause you to pass them in sorrow and anguish; and you, however, have no just cause of complaint, by reason of such his dispensation towards you. We are come here to inquire after your health, and do you the best service in our power. But give me leave to tell you, we are troubled to find you in such disorder; not so much because of the sickness God has been pleased to visit you with, tho' this be matter of no small grief to us, as because you are so unable to bear it. It would far better become you, to rest satisfied, that a wise and good God will lay nothing upon you, but for wise and good ends; and that (e) *all things* you do or may suffer, shall work together for your good, if you truly love and fear him. (f) *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* And nothing can ever befall you, but he knows how to turn it to your advantage.

(c) Job iii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. (d) Ver. 24. (e) Rom. viii.

28. (f) Lam. iii. 33.

Anchith. Welcome, my good friends. It is very kindly done of you to visit a poor sick wretch, as you see I am. I am very unfit company for you, my sickness is so severe upon me. And, oh, that the end of my life were come! I am overwhelm'd with pain. All my comfort is gone; and my joy is turn'd into sighs and groans, and perpetual complaints.

Euseb. Remember, *Anchithanes*, that you are a Christian; and it is God who sends your sickness; and you are therefore nearly concern'd to bear all that he lays upon you, with a perfect submission to his most holy will.

Anchith. I own my fault, and shall endeavour to amend it; but really my sickness is such as flesh and blood cannot tell how to bear, though I do struggle all I can.

Euseb. Flesh and blood, perhaps, cannot bear it; but reason and understanding may, and religion must bear it, without fretting and discontent; considering from whom it comes, and for what ends it may be inflicted.

Theoph. To murmur, and be dissatisfied at God's dealing with you, is so quite wrong, that nothing can be more undutiful, or more unbecoming the relation you stand in to Almighty God, nor any thing more clearly against your own interest, both temporal and eternal. Patience and submission to the divine will, even under our greatest pressures and calamities, is a necessary christian virtue, and such as we all make profession of. And every deviation from it is not only a violation of the laws of our religion, but it argues a great distrust of God's goodness, and is, besides, a wrong to ourselves. (g) *I was dumb*, says the Psalmist, *and opened not my mouth, because it was thy doing.* And, (b) *Wo unto him*, saith the prophet *Isaiab*, *who striveth with his Maker; Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou! (i) Wherefore doth the living man complain,* says the pro-

(g) Psal. xxxix. 9.
iii. 39.

(b) Isa. xlv. 9.

(i) Lament.

phet *Jeremiah*, a man for the punishment of his sins? And says *Micah*, (k) *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* And in the New Testament we are taught to be (l) *patient in tribulation*; and (m) *in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content*; and (n) *not to murmur at God's dealing with us, but (o) to submit ourselves to God, and (p) cast our care upon him, not doubting but that he will take care of us, when we do so.* And it is therefore a necessary duty of Christianity, quietly and resignedly to bear all the afflictions it pleases God to try us with, how sharp soever they be. And the sharper they are, so much the properer season is it for the exercise of this virtue, and so much the more laudable and conspicuous does it appear. Besides, it deserves to be well consider'd, that how grievous and severe soever your present visitation be, it falls vastly short of what our blessed Lord willingly condescended to suffer upon our account. (q) *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.* And (r) *though he were in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made he himself of no reputation, but took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Our blessed Lord, the only begotten and dearly beloved Son of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, did not refuse to debase himself to the lowest degree, to suffer want, and penury, and labour, and toil, and contempt, and disgrace; and at last, to die the most painful, as well as the most shameful of deaths, that of the cross. And can any that pretend to be his disciples, grudge and murmur at any lesser afflictions they may meet with? (s) *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord.*

(k) Mic. vii. 19. (l) Rom. xii. 12. (m) Phil. iv. 11.
(n) 1 Cor. x. 10. (o) James iv. 7. (p) 1 Pet. v. 7. (q) 2 Cor.
viii. 9. (r) Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. (s) Mat. x. 25.

And if our Saviour endured ſuch a *ſight of afflictions*, and not for his own, but for our ſakes, how totally inexcusable muſt we leave ourſelves, if we complain and are diſſatisfied, when called upon to *tread in his ſteps*, and bear ſome lighter burden, out of compliance with his example, and obedience to his commands! If we be obliged to *(t) be holy in all manner of converſation, as he which hath called us is holy*, it neceſſarily follows in particular, that we muſt ſtudy to ſhew ourſelves patient under the worſt of calamities, as he our Lord was patient. Nor can any thing be more reaſonably requir'd of us, than that ſuch as profeſs themſelves followers of the meek and ſuffering *Jeſus*, be always prepar'd to conform themſelves to the pattern he has ſet them, by ſuffering with unwearied meekneſs and reſignation, as he did; eſpecially conſidering farther, that how acute and tormenting ſoever the pains are, which any of us are called to bear, they however fall infinitely ſhort of what we have all juſtly deſerved, by our folly and diſobedience. It is of the infinite mercy of Almighty God, that death and everlaſting deſtruction has not been our portion long ſince, and that we are not now roaring under the extremity of his indignation, in the bottomleſs pit, together with the devil and his angels. And conſequently whatever miſfortune ſhort of this, is really a great bleſſing; and is ſo far from being juſt cauſe of repining and diſcontent, that the greateſt ſufferer on this ſide Hell, has juſt reaſon to admire the clemency, lenity, and kindneſs of God, in dealing abundantly more favourably with him, than he has deſerved. Think therefore with yourſelf, *Anchitbanes*, that you can never hope to acquit yourſelf as becomes a good Chriſtian, till you have brought your own inclinations into ſuch ſubmiſſion to the divine will, as readily and willingly to comply with whatever portion God ſees fit to chuſe for you. Think what your bleſſed Saviour has endur'd for you, and what an intolerable ſhame

(t) 1 Pet. i. 15.

it will be for you, to refuse to undergo the utmost barbarities, much more some short pain or sickness, in obedience to his command. Think again, what a blessing it is, that you are yet in a state of salvation, and not deliver'd over to those everlasting burnings, which were the due demerits of your sins; and to which you might long ago have been justly condemn'd, had it not been for the patience and long-suffering of Almighty God. Weigh these things well with thyself, and thou wilt soon be convinced, that instead of being dissatisfied at the divine dispensations, thou hast great reason, on the other hand, to own to God, with those in *Ezra*, that he (u) *has punish'd thee less*, abundantly less, *than thine iniquities deserve*; and to resolve, in the words of the prophet *Micah*, to (x) *bear the indignation of the Lord, because thou hast sinned against him*.

Anchitb. I acknowledge what you say to be a great truth, and shall therefore endeavour to compose my mind, and be as easy as my distemper will suffer me to be.

Euseb. Consider with yourself, that (y) ' for what
' soever cause this sickness is sent you, whether it be
' to try your patience for the example of others, and
' that your faith may be found in the day of the Lord,
' laudable, glorious, and honourable, to the increase
' of glory, and eternal felicity; or else it be sent to
' correct and amend in you, whatsoever offends the
' eyes of your Heavenly Father, if you truly repent
' you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently,
' trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son *Jesus*
' *Christ's* sake, and render him humble thanks for
' his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly to
' his will, it will certainly turn to your profit, and
' help you forward in the right way, that leads to
' everlasting life.' Think aright of it therefore, and
receive it as God's loving visitation.

Anchitb. As God's loving visitation?

(u) *Ezra* ix. 13.
of the sick.

(x) *Mic.* vii. 9.

(y) Office for the visita-

Euseb. Yes, so I say, as God's loving visitation; for so we are taught by God himself, in the Holy Scripture: (z) *As many as I love*, saith God, by the apostle St. John, *I rebuke and chasten*: hereby declaring, even his punishments in this world to be sent out of kindness and affection, and for the good of those who will be prevail'd with to make a right use of them. The wise man also inculcates the same truth: (a) *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son, in whom he delighteth.* As doth also the apostle to the Hebrews, exactly to the same purpose; (b) *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you, as with sons; for what son is he, whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* (c) 'These words, good brother, are God's words, and written in Holy Scripture, for our comfort and instruction, that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving, bear our Heavenly Father's correction, whensoever, by any manner of adversity, it shall please his gracious goodness to visit us; and there should be no greater comfort to christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently, adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For he himself went not up to joy, but first he suffer'd pain: he enter'd not into his glory, before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy, is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life, is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life.'

(z) Rev. iii. 19. (a) Prov. iii. 11, 12. (b) Heb. xii. 7, 8, 9, 10.
(c) Office for the visitation of the sick.

Anchith.

Anchitb. I earnestly desire to submit to God's will. But yet I am apt to think, no father uses his son as I am used.

Euseb. (d) No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby. Agreeably whereto, says the apostle St. James, (e) Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

Anchitb. I thought myself in a happy state, till I was oppressed with this fit of sickness. I thank God, I have always lived above want, and easily, and to my own satisfaction. But alas! since this unfortunate change, I am forced to lie here, as you see me, weeping and mourning, with a heart full of sorrow and care, tormented to a great degree, and yet not knowing where to find a remedy.

Philog. This is to be expected from God only. Physicians may administer proper medicines, but it is God's blessing alone, that can make them successful. And it is upon him alone you must depend for deliverance.

Anchitb. I do so; but he has not yet thought fit to grant it; and suppose he should not, what must I do then?

Philog. Then you must take care to follow *Theophilus's* advice, and dispose yourself, in the humblest manner, to submit to his will, in whatever he lays upon you.

Euseb. The way to enter into glory is by the cross: by this way our Lord and master enter'd into his Father's kingdom; and if we would follow him thither, it must be by the same way. He was (f) made perfect by suffering. And such who take upon them the profession of his name, must not think themselves hardly dealt by, if they be call'd to suffer too; whether by the hand of man, or by the hand of God himself. And indeed, calamities and afflictions are an excellent

(d) Heb. xii. 11. (e) James i. 12. (f) Heb. ii. 10. and v. 8, 9.

preparative for a better state; such as want, contempt, reproach, losses, persecution, imprisonment, undeserved punishment, and, which more particularly concerns yourself, bodily pains and infirmities, and the most uneasy and wasting diseases; and, in a word, whatsoever serves to *mortify the old man* in us, and to wean our minds from the world, and to raise up our affections to, and make us diligently inquisitive after, another and a better state.

Anchith. I sincerely own God's power and authority. But yet, it seems very hard for me to conceive, that these severe visitations are inflicted by God upon his beloved children and favourites; and are not rather a token of his heavy displeasure, and that those who labour under them, are to be looked upon as objects of his wrath. And, to deal plainly with you, all I suffer at this time in my body, is not more grievous to me, than the apprehension I labour under, and cannot shake off, that this severe treatment is too plain an evidence of God's being estranged from me, or rather that he hates me.

Theoph. Not so fast, my dear friend; think again. Have not the faithfulest and best servants of God been constantly observed to meet with their share of afflictions here, and many times far beyond divers of the most vicious and profligate wretches? So that were it not for the inward comfort and support they find in themselves in this life, and their hopes and expectations of a better at their departure hence, a great part of them, at least, might justly be said to be, as *St. Paul* speaks, (g) *of all men most miserable*. Remember the case of *Abel*, of *Jacob*, of *Joseph*, of *Job*, *Moses* and *David*, of *St. John Baptist*, *St. Stephen*, *St. Peter*, *St. James*, *St. John*, and the rest of the apostles and evangelists, and innumerable other martyrs and confessors. Were not these the favourites of heaven, and singularly interested in the divine protection and kindness? or were they without their crosses or trials? Were they not all greatly

(g) 1 Cor. xv. 19.

afflicted,

afflicted, and abundance of them barbarously put to death? What numbers do we read of, of the holiest and best of men, such (*b*) of whom the world was not worthy, who yet had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments; were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted by terrible cruelties, were slain with the sword! As others also were in wants and distress, and fear, and without any certain habitation; not knowing where to hide themselves, but being forced to wander about in deserts and mountains, and dens and caves of the earth, covering themselves with sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Can you possibly deny these to have been God's undoubted children, and truly beloved of him? And on the other hand, do you imagine, *Anchithanes*, that your sufferings may in any wise be compar'd with theirs? If not, consider seriously whether it becomes you to be dissatisfied at your present condition; and be invited to greater humiliation by reason of your sins, which call aloud for these, and much heavier chastisements, and shew yourself more submissive and resigned to the divine will, and that infinite wisdom and goodness which brings them upon you. Set before your eyes that admirable patience of *Job* (*i*), under a series of successive afflictions of divers kinds. Call to mind how pitiable and disconsolate his forlorn estate was, when, from one of the richest of all the eastern part of the world, he was suddenly stripp'd of all. His (*k*) oxen and his asses were seiz'd by the *Sabeans*, and his servants slain, who should have saved them out of the hands of these invaders. His (*l*) sheep, and others of his servants, were consum'd by fire from heaven. His (*m*) camels were carried away by the *Chaldeans*, and the remainder of his servants were destroyed by them. And, to add to such his heavy calamities, in the last place comes *fluctus decumanus*, the surest stroke of all; his (*n*) children, both sons and daughters, were all of them kill'd by the fall of

(*b*) Heb. xi. 36, 37, 38. (*i*) Job i. 3. (*k*) Ver. 15. (*l*) Ver. 16.
 (*m*) Ver. 17. (*n*) Ver. 18, 19.

the houſe, where they were feaſting together. So that now he was all of a ſudden become as poor, as he had been rich but a few hours before; and as great an object of pity, as he might have been before of envy. Yet durſt he not murmur at God for ſo woful a change. He remembered by whoſe good providence it came about, and would not ſuffer himſelf to break forth into any diſcontented and undutiful language. On the contrary, *He (o) aroſe, and rent his mantle, and ſhaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worſhipped, and ſaid, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* As much as to ſay, ‘ (p) I am but what I was at firſt, and what I muſt have been again at laſt; and he that hath ſtripped me of all before I die, hath taken nothing away but what he gave. Let him therefore be praiſed, who is the donor of all good things, and the diſpoſer of all events.’ (q) *In all this Job ſinned not,* nor ſpake one harſh or unbecoming word, when all theſe evils came ſo thick upon him. He did not bemoan himſelf as one rejected by God, and who muſt never more expect his favour, becauſe he found himſelf at preſent in ſuch calamitous circumſtances. No, he freely reſigned himſelf to the divine diſpoſal, and bleſſed and praiſed the Almighty, whom he knew to be the ſole author of all he had loſt, and to whom he ſtood indebted for the enjoyment of it hitherto. And can you now, good *Anchitbanes*, think it reaſonable to behave yourſelf after a contrary manner? Ought you not rather to labour, that your preſent ſickneſs may make you the more ſenſible of the true value of that health you now want, and the more thankful for the long enjoyment you have had of it? And what if you are now deprived of it? May not this be for your good? and ſo far from a token of God's diſpleaſure, and a ſign he is irreconcilable to you, that it may be taken from you out of kindneſs, and ſo may require not your

(o) Job i. 20, 21. (p) Bp. Patrick on the Words. (q) Job. i. 22.

patience only, but your unfeigned gratitude, for being thus dealt with?

Euseb. You ought to remember, that God is infinitely wiser than you; and knows what is fittest for you, or any of his servants, far better than you or they do.

Theoph. There is nothing more common in the world, than for the best of men, and of Christians, to meet with crosses and afflictions whilst they remain here. This was most remarkably notorious, during those severe times of persecution, wherein such multitudes of our Lord's disciples were called to seal their profession with their blood. (r) Some were burn'd alive, some were slain with the sword, and others were exposed to ravenous wild beasts, and were devour'd by them; and (s) even those of the highest rank were tortur'd, put in chains, and crucified; some were banished, some had the soles of their feet dried up by a gentle flame, some had torches applied to all parts of their bodies, till their skin cracked and shrivel'd up, and the fire came at length to their very bowels. (t) Some were broiled, some empaled, some beheaded. (u) Some were put in boats, and turned afloat in the sea to be drowned. (x) Others had their limbs forced out of joint, and their bodies torn with whips, were pulled in pieces, were hung up by a hand, or a foot, or stretched upon the rack, or were carbonadoed, and basted with salt and vinegar. In a word, divers sorts of unknown punishments were invented for them; and no age or sex were spared, but men, women, and children, were all adjudged to the most barbarous, most abusive, and most painful death. And that they might not be too easily dispatched, the execution was sometimes stopped in the midst, and the martyr remitted to prison, not out of kindness, but that, having recovered a little breath, he might be enabled for a new conflict. And all this

(r) Tertull. Scorp. c. 1. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 7. (s) Lactant. de Mortibus Persec. c. 21. (t) Clem. Alex. Str. l. 2.
(u) Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 6. Sozom. l. 6. c. 14. (x) Euseb. l. 8. c. 9, 10, &c. Socrat. Hist. l. 3. c. 16.

merely for the sake of their Christianity. Yet were these holy martyrs so far from looking upon themselves as abandon'd by God, *because they suffered such things*, (y) that they rejoiced rather, and gloried in them, esteeming it as a favour, that God would call them in so signal a manner, to follow their blessed Saviour, and *be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with*. And in the more quiet and halcyon times of the church, it was never known, that the faithfulest and best Christians were exempt from their portion of temporal calamities. When not harrassed, and persecuted, and treated as the refuse and off-scouring of all things, they have yet been subject to sicknesses and diseases, and the other inconveniencies usually incident to this state of mortality and misery. So that in them is verified, as it is also in the rest of the world, that (z) *man that is born of a woman, hath but a few days to live, and full of trouble*; that (a) *he is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward*, and that his (b) *days are evil, as well as few*. Mankind in general are all obnoxious to grievances and crosses, and divers sorts of disasters and misfortunes; and the good man among the rest. Such an one has, undoubtedly, better supports under his troubles than others have; but he is not totally secured from them in his best estate. I cannot persuade myself, that his religion does not intitle him to, and procure for him, divers worldly blessings and advantages; since we all know (c) *godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and not only of that which is to come*: besides that, religion and a right government of ourselves, tends naturally very much to abate and take off the edge of whatsoever calamity, and disposes the sufferer to bear it to the best advantage. But yet, so long as good men consist of flesh and blood no less than others, and not only are

(y) Martyr. S. Ignat. c. 2. S. Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. c. 1. S. Polycarp. Martyr. c. 2. Just. Mart. Apol. 1. B. Cypriani Pass. & Ep. 30. & 31. Sulpic. Sever. Hist. Sacr. An. 304.

(z) Job xiv. 1.

(a) Chap. v. 7.

(b) Gen. xlvii. 9.

(c) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

liable

liable to outward accidents in like manner with them; but find themselves restrain'd from divers of those courses, for their own preservation or advantage, which others freely allow themselves to take; no wonder if they be involved in wants, and losses, and misfortunes, and obnoxious to bodily distempers and infirmities, as their neighbours are. However, there is no reason to conclude from hence, that they are out of God's favour, and that their chastisements argue him to be estranged from them; and that they are therefore to hope for no good from them. This is a great mistake, and I know not how my friend *Anchithanes* comes to fall into it. I am sure you ought rather to reflect upon what the apostle declares, *Heb. xii. 8. If ye be without chastisement, whereof all the true and genuine sons of God are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Anchith. I cannot deny but what you say is agreeable both to scripture and reason; and I will therefore consider it, so far as my weak and painful condition will permit.

Theoph. I am glad to hear you say so: and I pray God give you a right understanding in all things. But methinks it should be no small means of settling your judgment in this point, to attend awhile to what our Lord and Saviour discourses concerning the rich glutton in the gospel; and poor distressed *Lazarus*, who lay at his gate in a helpless condition; and to remember how mightily the case was alter'd with them, when they came to die. What worldly advantage was wanting to this man? Did he not enjoy all his heart could desire? He was rich, was in health, was finely clad, and kept a plentiful table, (d) *faring sumptuously every day*; yet no friend, no favourite of God. In the mean time, *Lazarus* was miserably poor, and knew not where to get a meal's meat; which made him wait at the door for some relief, (e) *desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table*; and would

(d) Luke xvi. 19.

(e) Ver. 20, 21.

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have

have thought it a happineſs, if he could have obtained them. He was, moreover, unhealthy, and full of ſores, an uneaſy ſpectacle, both to himſelf and others; but he was nevertheleſs a good man, one that, like *Job*, feared God, and eſchewed evil; and who had learned to ſubmit to his hard circumſtances, as well knowing they were order'd him by God. Such was the difference between them in their mortal ſtate. But this continued not long, before death came, and ſet them at a greater diſtance from each other; and then behold a new, and a very different ſcene opened itſelf. For this beggar, as mean and deſpicable as he had been thought, (f) *was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom*, the place of happy ſouls after their departure out of this life. The learned Dr. *Lightfoot* (g) teaches, that *it was univerſally believed among the Jews, that pure and holy ſouls, when they left this body, went into happineſs to Abraham, to the ſame place where he was; and that our Saviour ſpeaks according to the receiv'd opinion of that nation in this affair, when he ſaith, Many ſhall come from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham. But this being carried into Abraham's boſom, ſeems to denote ſome peculiar prerogative, ſome greater happineſs than a bare tranſlation into the place where that patriarch was. For I take the phraſe to be of like importance to what is ſaid of (h) St. John's lying in, or leaning on, our Saviour's boſom at ſupper; and ſo to imply in it an alluſion to the manner of feaſting in thoſe days; that Lazarus was not only with Abraham, or in Abraham's bay, as ſome render the expreſſion, but was ſeated in glory next to him, ſo as to be ſaid to lie in his boſom at the heavenly entertainment. (i) *The rich man alſo died, and was buried.* Here is no mention of any angels to take care of his departed ſoul. And certainly he had none to concern themſelves about him, except the infernal fiends, whom we may reaſonably conclude to have been ready prepared, to drag him into the*

(f) Luke xvi. 22. (g) In loc. (h) John xiii. 23. Ἀνακείμενος
ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ. (i) Luke xvi. 22.

same destruction with themselves; especially considering what follows in the next words, *(k)* *And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment.* An undeniable proof, that, notwithstanding all the plenty and profuseness wherein he had lived, he was far enough from being beloved by God, who had indeed bestowed all his wealth upon him, but who withal sets so mean an estimate upon all worldly advantages, that *(l)* *no man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him.*

Philog. This parable makes it very clear, that want, or contempt, or fores, and, by parity of reason, sicknesses and diseases, sent by God to the good man, are not to be looked upon as the effect of his displeasure and wrath, but rather as a sign of his favour and goodwill. At least, I am sure, thus much may be unquestionably inferred from it, that no one can be known to be in God's favour, from *the abundance of the things that he possesses* in this life; nor any one to be out of his favour, because he has them not bestowed upon him.

Euseb. Very right. But the psalmist tells us, moreover, concerning afflictions, that they are not only no just cause of despondency, and distrust of God's concern for us; but, on the contrary, if rightly improved, (and if they be not, that lies at our own door, and is chargeable only upon ourselves; if rightly improved, I say) they may become highly beneficial to us: *(m)* *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord.* And again, from his own experience, he proclaims the goodness of God, in correcting him for his miscarriages, and thereby reducing him to repentance for them, and a care to walk more uprightly for the future. *(n)* *Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word:* And a little after, *(o)* *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.* And again, he makes this profession, *(p)* *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness*

(k) Luke xvi. 23.

(l) Ecclef. ix. 1.

(m) Psal. xciv. 12.

(n) Psal. cxix. 67.

(o) Ver. 71.

(p) Ver. 75.

hast afflicted me. 'It is an act of thy sovereign mercy,' says Dr. Hammond, upon the place, 'which thou hast promised to make good to me, to send me such afflictions as these. These are but a necessary part of discipline, and so a mercy to me; and having promised not to deny me real and principal mercies, thou art obliged in fidelity to send them.' And that they are for our benefit, and come therefore out of mercy, and for our good, the apostle St. Paul also acquaints us: (q) *When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord; not out of passion and displeasure, and to our own confusion, but for our advantage, and the promotion of our best and truest interest, the eternal salvation of our souls, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Our good and gracious God aims at our reformation and salvation, by his necessary corrections, when he sees us going astray from his commandments; the proper intent of them being to make us sensible of our folly and wickedness, and what is like to be the dreadful consequence of them, if persisted in. And, (r) *Happy is the man whom he correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.* In a word, (s) *He is the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; and so orders his visitations, when received as they ought to be, that he comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

Philog. Our Lord Jesus Christ, that spotless Lamb of God, (t) *who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, enter'd not into glory, but by the cross.* So says the apostle, (u) *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for suffering death, crowned with glory and honour.* And it is not very reasonable for such who profess themselves his disciples, to expect that they shall attain to the possession of a heavenly

(q) 1 Cor. xi. 32.

(r) Job v. 17, 18.

(s) 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

(t) 1 Pet. ii. 22.

(u) Heb. ii. 9.

inheritance, by living always in joy, and health, and all temporal felicity; but rather by patiently taking up the cross, and thankfully receiving whatsoever it pleases God to lay upon them. (x) *The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.* And accordingly our Saviour declares, that (y) *whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after him, cannot be his disciple.* Which, though spoken with a particular respect to the case of suffering persecution, for his name and religion's sake, will yet hold good in all other instances whereinssoever it pleases God to call us to suffer; and amongst other, *Anchithanes*, when any come to be in the circumstances you so complain of, which, how hard soever you think them, are nothing like to what our Lord condescended to undergo for your sake and mine, and all of us.

Euseb. In St. *John's Revelation*, we read, that those (z) *who are arrayed in white robes, and are continually before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, are such as came out of great tribulation.*

Theoph. You say right; for such, in truth, are fittest for the kingdom of God. Neither are the voluptuous worldlings, who taste of no cross, but have their fill of mirth and pleasure, and study only to gratify their carnal desires, ever like to attain to the joys of Heaven. It is too much to expect, that we should live here, in a constant uninterrupted enjoyment of all earthly satisfaction, and yet hereafter be admitted to reign gloriously with Christ in Heaven. (a) *We cannot serve God and Mammon.* And whatsoever therefore tends to withdraw our affections from these transitory delusive satisfactions, and in any measure to wean us from the world, and the things in it, as afflictions naturally do, is consequently of great use to us; and we are highly to blame, if we do not improve it to our own advantage. So that you see, my friend *Anchithanes*, what just occasion you have to thank Almighty

(x) Matth. x. 24. (y) Luke xiv. 27. (z) Rev. vii. 14.
(a) Luke xvi. 13.

God, that it has pleaſed him ſo far to remember you, as to lay his hand upon you, to remind you of your own frailty, and both the unſatisfactorineſs and uncertainty of all ſublunary enjoyments; and to put you upon *ſeeking after a better and an enduring ſubſtance*; which having once obtained, you will be in no danger of ever being ſick, or grieved, or tormented, or in trouble or want, any more. You are alſo to look upon your ſickneſs as a trial of your patience, to ſee whether you can bear it as you ought. And I cannot therefore but heartily recommend to you, the advice of the wiſe ſon of *Sirach*: *(b) My ſon, if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy ſoul for temptation; ſet thy heart aright, and conſtantly endure, and make not haſte in time of trouble. Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayſt be increaſed at thy laſt end. Whatſoever is brought upon thee, take chearfully; and be patient, when thou art changed to a low eſtate. For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adverſity.*

Anchith. Your advice, I confeſs, is good, and I will ſet myſelf to put it in practice; which I ſhall be the better able to do, becauſe I am ſenſibly affected with what has been ſo plentifully alledged out of the Holy Scriptures. Believe me, Sirs, it is a reviving cordial to my ſoul, to hear ſuch plain evidence from the word of God, that this ſickneſs which I now labour under, may probably be a loving viſitation of God, and an inſtance of his good-will towards me.

Theoph. It is matter of unfeigned joy to me, that you have attain'd to a conviction of this comfortable truth. And I beg of you not to doubt, but that your benign and gracious God, and moſt tender and loving Father, who has promis'd, *that all things ſhall work together for good, to them that love him*, will crown this your ſorrow with joy and comfort in the end. *(c) He is faithful, and will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape the overpreſſure of it, that you may be able to*

(b) Eccleſ. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

(c) 1 Cor. x. 13.

bear it, without prejudice to yourself, or dishonour to the holy religion you profess. (d) *His wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in his pleasure is life; heaviness may endure for a night, but it shall not last long, for it is often seen, that joy cometh in the morning.* This the royal psalmist experimented in his own case, and he held himself obliged to own God's goodness in it, and to bless him for it. (e) *Thou, says he, hast turned my heaviness into joy; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing; O my God, I will give thee thanks for ever.* And at another time, (f) *Oh! what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me! and yet didst thou turn and refresh me; yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again. Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side. Therefore will I praise thee with faithfulness, O God, playing upon an instrument of musick: unto thee will I sing upon the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.* And again, (g) *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.*

Anchith. Amen, Amen, good Lord. I trust thou wilt deal thus graciously with me; who am now dejected and weak, but hope to be again in a better capacity to serve thee.

Theoph. Be not discouraged, nor suffer yourself to question, but that if you (h) call on the name of the Lord, you shall be delivered, and shall find great comfort. To this end, hear again the declarations of the foresaid royal prophet, professing what singular manifestations of divine goodness, in this respect, he had opportunity to observe. (i) *The righteous crieth, and the Lord beareth, and delivereth him out of all his troubles. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart; and*

(d) Psal. xxx. 5. (e) Ver. 12, 13. (f) Psal. lxxi. 18, 19, 20. (g) Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6. (h) Joel ii. 32. (i) Psal. xxxiv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

will ſave ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken. The Lord redeemeth the ſoul of his ſervants; and none of them that truſt in him ſhall be deſolate.

Euseb. Theſe are comfortable paſſages of Scripture; and, if ſeriouſly laid to heart, muſt needs be of great uſe to an afflicted ſoul; which cannot fail of being delighted with the thoughts of a gracious Divine Providence, continually watching over us for good, that will never be wanting to any of us, unleſs through our own fault. When men once forſake God, no wonder if he forſake them, and leave them to be toſſed about by every blaſt of an adverſe fortune, till at length they become overwhelm'd with evils, and ready to ſink under them. But whiſt we duly fear him, and put our truſt in him, he will let us ſee, to our comfort, that this is the ſureſt way to get rid of our burden. So himſelf profeſſes by the pſalmiſt: (*k*) *Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* And the apoſtle St. Peter exhorts, to reſt upon him in all our ſtreights and neceſſities, from this conſideration, that he will not neglect us when we do ſo; (*l*) *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.* He careth for us, and oftentimes works deliverances, beyond all we could have an expectation of.

Philog. So that here you ſee, *Anchithanes*, that as afflictions are no proof of any one's being out of God's favour, ſo has he ſhewn himſelf ready to remove them, when fitly applied to, to do it.

Anchith. This is comfortable indeed.

Euseb. But not more comfortable than true, as divers relations in Scripture plainly teſtify.

Anchith. Will you pleaſe, Sir, to repeat ſome of them, if it be not too much trouble to you?

Euseb. Do not think, my friend, that I can reckon any ſervice, that is in my power to do you, troubleſome. It would rather be a great delight to me. And

(*k*) Pſal. l. 15.

(*l*) 1 Pet. v. 7.

accordingly I most willingly enter upon what you desire. And to pass over the more antient patriarchs, every one knows what portion was allotted to *Joseph*, both before and after his coming into *Egypt*; yet not for any fault of his own, but purely to try his faith, love, obedience, patience, thankfulness and perseverance, and that deliverance might be wrought for others, no less than himself, by his means. He was not only cast into (m) *the pit*, without any provocation given on his part, except barely (n) the declaring his dreams: and sold by his brethren (o) against all reason and justice, and natural affection, into slavery; but, being brought by the (p) *Ismaelites* into *Egypt*, was sold again to *Potiphar*, an officer of *Pharaoh*, and captain of his guards. And though it were no small alleviation of such his captivity, that he found himself in a little time made (q) ruler of his master's house, and entrusted with all his concerns; yet pray observe what quickly followed. Because he had, as became a faithful servant of God, a greater regard to his own (r) virtue, than to the repeated solicitations of his lustful mistress, he was falsely accused by her, of having made an attempt upon her chastity; and, upon this unjust accusation, not only lost all the interest he had before in his master's favour, but was cruelly thrown into (s) prison, and kept there for some years under confinement. This was a hard case, for an innocent man to be forced out of his own country, made a slave in a foreign land, and there wrongfully accused and imprisoned. And who would not have been ready, sadly to deplore his unhappy fate, and the ill usage he had met with? Yet behold the result of all this was, that the mercy of God manifested itself the more illustriously, in rescuing him out of these his undeserved sufferings. For having found *Joseph*, upon so remarkable a trial, to be faithful, constant, and patient, he deliver'd him out of prison, set him at liberty, and gave him such favour with king *Pharaoh*, that he ap-

(m) Gen. xxxvii. 24. (n) Ver. 19. (o) Ver. 28. (p) Chap. xxxix. 1. (q) Ver. 4. (r) Ver. 7, &c. (s) Ver. 20.

pointed him (t) ruler over all the land of Egypt, and put his own ring upon him, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and with a gold chain about his neck; made him ride immediately after himself, in the second chariot that he had; and caused the knee to be bowed before him.

Anchitb. This I freely acknowledge to be a wonderful change of fortune, and a singular mercy of God to his poor afflicted servant.

Euseb. See another signal instance of God's goodness in this respect: Before king *David* was quietly settled in his kingdom, he met with great opposition, and causeless persecution from *Saul*, to whom he always shewed himself a most dutiful and loyal subject: insomuch that when he had only cut off the skirt of *Saul's* garment, in the cave at *Engedi*, that it might be a testimony of his reverence to his lord, whom this shewed to have been indubitably in his power at that time, if he durst have offer'd him any violence; yet even for this (u) his heart smote him, and he was uneasy at so small an indignity done to his prince, and for so plausible a reason too. So (x) inviolable did he esteem the person of his outrageous sovereign. Yet could not this obtain him his quiet, but he was driven from place to place, to save his life; was (y) hunted as a partridge in the mountains, (to use his own expression) and never could be at rest during the remainder of *Saul's* reign. And again, when it had pleased God, without any insurrection of his own, to bring him to the throne, which he would not seek to gain before his time by any unlawful means, what frequent disturbances did he meet with from his undutiful children! but especially how was he forced (z) to fly out of the land for *Abshalom*! And glad that he could escape so, that he might hope in time to recover his kingdom, most unjustly with-held from him. He had this testimony from the prophet *Samuel*, that (a) the

(t) Gen. xli. 40, &c. (u) 1 Sam. xxiv. 5. (x) *Tantum intelligebat personæ ejus esse sanctitudinem, Grot. de Jure Belli ac Pacis, l. i. c. 4. § 7.* (y) 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. (z) 2 Sam. xix. 9. (a) 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

Lord had sought him out a man after his own heart, and the Lord had commanded him to be captain over his people. Yet this hinder'd not, but that he met with a great deal of sorrow and vexation from time to time, as well after as before his coming to the throne. He makes frequent and sad complaints of his misfortunes throughout his book of *Psalms*, too many to need that I should trouble you, or our other friends here with the repetition of them. Yet did it please God in his due time (b) to turn and refresh him, and rescue him out of his troubles and adversities, bringing him to great honour, and comforting him on every side, as himself relates, and as our good friend here, *Theophilus*, has noted before me. Thus he continued as long as his natural strength lasted, and at length, being (c) old, and stricken in years, he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city called after his own name, (d) the city of *David*.

Anchitb. This shews that Almighty God was not regardless of him, though he had suffered him, for a good part of his life, to be under affliction, and to meet with a large share of troubles and vexations.

Euseb. But no mere man was ever to be compared with *Job*, in this respect, so particularly remarkable was the method of God's dealing with him in each estate. He was once, as *Theophilus* observ'd, (e) the greatest man in the east; (f) had children, and servants, and oxen, and asses, camels, and sheep in great plenty; (g) and yet of a sudden became as poor and naked, as if he had never been owner of any of them. They were all, as I noted before, taken from him in one day; and he had nothing left him but his wife, (h) who, instead of a comfort in all his distress, proved a temptress to him, and so an addition to all his miseries. Besides all this, he was plagued in his own person, to a very great degree, being smitten (i) with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown; till he took a pot-

(b) *Psal.* lxxi. 18, 19. (c) *1 Kings* i. 1. (d) *Chap.* ii. 10.
 (e) *Job* i. 3. (f) *Ver.* 14, &c. (g) *Ver.* 20. (h) *Chap.* ii. 9, 10.
 (i) *Ver.* 7, 8

sheer'd to scrape himself withal, and sat down among the ashes, as a sign of his excessive grief. He was scoffed at likewise, and derided, upon this sad alteration of his circumstances; and such as durst not formerly have looked him in the face, had now the confidence to mock and fleer at him. The very (k) youth had him in derision; and these of the meaner sort too, such whose fathers he would have disdain'd to set with the dogs of his flock. And his friends, that came to see him in this woeful plight, like (l) miserable comforters, as they were, instead of condoling with him, and pitying his calamity, and applying fit lenitives to assuage his anguish and sorrow of mind, for so sharp and unexpected a visitation (m), set themselves to rebuke him for not following the same advice he had used to give to others in adversity. They spake not a word of comfort to him, but endeavour'd to persuade him, that he had reason to suspect his own sincerity, because such excessive sufferings were not wont to be inflicted upon innocent persons, but upon the merciless and wicked oppressors, whom, tho' ever so mighty, God had always chosen to humble, at one time or other: they concluded, tho' very unjustly, that all these calamities were sent upon Job for his miscarriages; and that he, good man, must needs have been a great sinner, or otherwise he would not have been so great a sufferer. Yet notwithstanding all these crosses, all his losses and disappointments, all his pains and sores, and all the discouragements he met with from his mistaken friends, he still continued stedfastly to wait God's pleasure, in a faithful and resolute adherence to his duty, under all the difficulties that already had, or might farther befall him. It was his fix'd and steady purpose, that (n) all the time his breath was in him, and the spirit of God was in his nostrils, his lips should not speak wickedness, nor his tongue utter deceit; that, till he died, he would not remove his integrity from him: but his righteousness be

(k) Job xxx. 1. (l) Chap. xvi. 2. (m) Chap. xxi. &c.
 (n) Chap. xxvii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

would hold fast, and not let it go; nor should his heart reprove him as long as he lived. And (o) though God should slay him, yet would he persevere in putting his trust in him. And to his wife, setting herself to seduce him from his uprightness, and tempting him to (p) curse God and die, rather than continue to groan under such bitter sorrows as he had to conflict with, he only replied, that she talked like a vain wicked woman; piously representing to her withal, how unreasonable it was to take any thing ill at God's hand; and that the more good any have received from him, the less reason they would have to complain of any ill that might succeed it. (q) *Thou speakest*, says he, *as one of the foolish women speak: what, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*

Anchith. O my God, grant me, I beseech thee, the like patience.

Philog. Oh! do not doubt of the goodness of God to you, *Be strong in the Lord*, and wait his determination, with a sure trust in, and intire resignation to, his good Providence; and he will turn all things, even what you most complain of, to your own advantage. (r) *O tarry the Lord's leisure; be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.* (s) *For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.* (t) *Oh how plentiful is his goodness, which he has laid up for them that fear him; and which he has prepar'd for them that put their trust in him, even before the sons of men.*

Euseb. If you please, I will proceed in what I was discoursing concerning Job, whereby to shew the goodness of God to him.

Anchith. I beseech you do. For though I am not so ignorant of the scripture, as not to know it, it will however, comfort me to hear it repeated.

(o) Job. xiii. 15. (p) Chap. ii. 9. (q) Ver. 10. (r) Psal. xxvii. 16. (s) Isa. xxx. 15. (t) Psal. xxxi. 21.

Euseb.

Euseb. After that Almighty God, by divers sorts of afflictions, had tried this patient, holy, good, and perfect man, and had found him in all respects constantly and inflexibly tenacious of his integrity, in spite of all the plagues that *Satan* could lay upon him; he (x) was pleased with and commended him; *the Lord also accepted Job.* And (y) *the Lord turned the captivity of Job; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.* He restored to him all that he had lost; and not only so, but he ceased not, till he had made him twice as rich as ever he had been. Thus (z) *the Lord blessed the latter end of Job, more than the beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses; he had also seven sons, and three daughters. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons sons, even four generations.*

Anchitb. Blessed be God, that he is thus good to his servants, and does not forsake those that duly put their trust in him!

Philog. Of this good man *Job*, *St. James* makes mention, in confirmation of the great truth now treated of: (a) *Ye have heard, saith the apostle, of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

Theoph. Thus you see, *Anchitbanes*, from the Holy Scripture, that corporal afflictions, of whatever kind, are no certain token of God's anger, but what befalls the righteous as well as others, and from which his truest and best servants can promise themselves no exemption. You have heard also of the loving-kindness of God towards such as have been found faithful upon trial, and his readiness to restore them to a more flourishing state than they were in before. Where-

(x) *Job* xlii. 8, 9. (y) *Ver.* 10. (z) *Ver.* 12, 13, 15, 16.
(a) *James* v. 11.

fore be not impatient in this your sickness; but be thankful to God for it, and study to make a good improvement of it. Wait the good pleasure of God, and suffer him contentedly to dispose of you as he shall determine with himself. And then fear not but he will be merciful to you, and will accomplish in you what he in his infinite wisdom shall see fittest and most proper for you. For (b) *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience, and comfort of the Holy Scripture, might have hope.*

Anchith. God's will be done on me! The Lord knows what is properest for such a wretched sinner as I am. (c) *Let him, therefore, do what seemeth him good.* Come life, come death, I shall endeavour to prepare myself for it, that so (d) *whether I live, I may live unto the Lord; or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord; or whether I live or die, I may be the Lord's.*

A Prayer for Dependence upon God in all Difficulties and Trials.

AND oh thou my heavenly Father, give me, I most humbly beseech thee, for my Saviour's sake, a patient and a thankful heart, that I may never murmur, or be dissatisfied, at thy gracious will, but be obedient to it in all things; that when my pains are sharpest, and my sickness most discouraging, and hardest to be borne, I may however lift up my soul to thee, and seek for help and relief from thee alone, calling upon thee as I do at present, saying, (e) O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, neither chasten me in thy displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul also is sore troubled; but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me! Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul; O save me for thy mercies sake. (f) Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me; for I am poor, and in

(b) Rom. xv. 4. (c) 1 Sam. iii. 18. (d) Rom. xiv. 8. (e) Psal. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4. (f) Psal. lxxxvi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

misery. My God, save thy servant, that putteth his trust in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord; for I will call daily upon thee. Comfort the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good and gracious; and of great mercy to all them that call upon thee. (g) O remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy, think upon me, O Lord; for thy goodness. (h) Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate, and in misery. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my troubles. Look upon my adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin. (i) Help me, O God of my salvation, for the glory of thy name; Oh deliver me, and be merciful to my sins, for thy name's sake. *I am not worthy the least of all thy favours; but it is thy property, O Lord, always to shew mercy, and do good to such as have no way deserv'd it at thy hand. Thou art my Strength, and my Hope: O be thou my mighty Saviour and Deliverer, both now and evermore. This I beg for the sake, and through the merits and mediation, of my ever blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Theoph. Give me leave to tell you, dear *Anchitbanes*, we are not a little delighted, to find you thus seriously and devoutly disposed, and that you have such a lively sense of God's gracious over-ruling Providence, and such a comfortable dependence upon it. Faint not, I beseech you, nor be discouraged; but *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Be mindful to call upon him continually; and then assure yourself, that, in all your afflictions and troubles, he will be your defence, your impenetrable shield, your strong tower, and invincible fortress. (k) *He will not leave you, nor forsake you*; but be with you, and assist, support, and comfort you in all your difficulties. Remember his gracious promise to such as put their trust in him,

(g) Psa. xxv. 6. (h) Ver. 15, 16, 17. (i) Psa. lxxix. 9.
(k) Heb. xiii. 5.

and study to get your mind seriously affected with it.

(l) *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him up, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will bear him: yea, I am with him in trouble; and will deliver him, and bring him to honour. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.*

Euseb. To be dissatisfied at sickness, or any other affliction, argues a great want of consideration, and a serious attendance to the vast distance that is betwixt God and us, the relation we stand in to him, as our Sovereign Lord and Creator, and the duty we therefore owe him, which would naturally incline us all to a ready submission to his most Holy Will, in all his determinations concerning us. For nothing can be more highly becoming poor, impotent, needy creatures, than intirely to resign themselves to their Creator's disposal; who, by virtue of his absolute dominion over them, may justly assign each one his work and station, as well as his reward, according to his own good pleasure; and who besides, being infinitely wiser than man, and loving us much better than we do ourselves, must therefore be much fitter to chuse what is most advantageous and best for us; and who, as daily experience shews, is never backward to bestow his benefits upon us, not only beyond and without our deserts, but even when we have highly deserved the contrary. (m) *In him we all live, move, and have our being.* And (n) *he has not left himself without a witness* of his continual bounty and goodness to his creatures without distinction, in that he indiscriminately *does them good, and gives them rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their heart with food and gladness.* He continually dispenses such blessings for the good of mankind, as naturally reach, not only to his faithful servants, but to their neighbours round about them, who are equally capacitated to partake of them with themselves. And yet, as

(l) Psal. xci. 14, 15, 16. (m) Acts xvii. 28. (n) Acts xiv. 16.

if this were not expreſs enough, our bleſſed Saviour tells us poſitively, that they are deſigned for the relief of the wicked, as well as of the righteous. For ſpeaking of our *(o) Father which is in Heaven*, he expreſſly affirms concerning him, that *he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good; and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt*. So liberal is our good and gracious God of his mercies and favours! And ſo conſtantly does he heap them upon ſuch as ſtand in need of them! And can any one that has received his ſubſiſtence, and all the good things he ever enjoyed, from God's bounty, murmur, and be diſpleaſed, becauſe he receives ſome mixture of evil and ſorrow with them?

Theoph. The conſideration of God's ſovereignty tied up *David's* tongue, when under great affliction at the proſperity of his enemies, and moſt probably of his rebellious ſon *Absalom*, and his accomplices: *(p) I was dumb*, ſays he, *I opened not my mouth*. And then follows the reaſon of this his ſilence and ſubmiſſion, *becauſe thou didſt it*: Becauſe it was the hand of God by which he ſuffer'd; this he readily acknowledged a ſufficient cauſe of his acquieſcence in it, how hard ſoever in itſelf. 'What is befallen me, ſays 'Dr. *Hammond* upon this place, I am far from re-
' pining or murmuring at: it comes, I know, from
' thee, whoſe diſpoſals are moſt wiſe; and be it never
' ſo ſharp, I am ſure I have well deſerved it.' And there is no reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould not be equally ſubmiſſive to the Divine Will in all caſes; ſeeing not only God has the ſame authority over us, with thoſe that were before us; but we have been bleſſed with ſuch peculiar bleſſings, as the world had before in hope and proſpect only; and the promiſes whereof were never actually compleated till our Saviour's incarnation. Which makes our ingratitude and diſſatisfaction the more abominable, and calls upon us therefore the more readily to ſubmit to the Divine Will in

(o) Matth. v. 45.

(p) Pfalm xxxix. 9.

all cases; whatsoever portion of sufferings may be allotted us.

Timoth. There is another very weighty reason, why we should thus give up ourselves to the Divine disposal; and that is, because of our own demerits. For be our afflictions ever so grievous, or our wants ever so pinching, it must be owned to the glory of God, that he is still gracious to us, and has *punished us less than our iniquities have deserved.* And this may well teach us silence, lest our dissatisfactions for lesser sufferings prevail, to the bringing down some heavier calamity upon us. This is a case wherein *every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty,* highly guilty, *before God,* if his infinite patience towards them, and the numerous undeserved benefits he loads them with, do not outweigh those lighter corrections they at any time smart under. There is none, but if he would seriously examine his own conscience, will immediately discover such a mass of wickedness there, as must inevitably convince him, that, how hard soever his case be, he has yet abundant cause to admire and magnify the infinite clemency of God towards him, in not having far more severely avenged himself upon so guilty a sinner. And it is intolerable ingratitude for him to complain of the loss only of one joint of a finger, when he has deserved to lose his hand; or rather to be uneasy at the cutting off his hair, when, instead thereof, he had justly forfeited his head.

Euseb. And if you inquire farther into the reasonableness of these complaints, you will soon see the ill management that is in them, amongst others, especially upon these two accounts: First, Because a patient compliance with the Divine Will is the best way the sufferer can take, to make himself easy under sufferings, whether sickness, or of any other kind. It is not necessary to turn a *stoick*, to experiment the truth of this. A man may soon find the benefit of such a deportment, in abating the pungency of his

distemper, tho' he has not brought himself to such a senseless degree of affection, (q) as to proclaim himself happy in *Phalaris's* Bull. For a truly christian patience, such as *Lapsius* (r) desired at the time of his death, is the best remedy we have at hand; which, though it will not remove our sufferings, will however be very useful, for taking off the edge of them, and making them the more tolerable; whilst, on the other hand, impatience makes a great addition to any evil that befalls us, by our unfitness to bear it; *non quia dura, sed quia molles patimur*, not so much from the weight of the affliction, as from our own weakness and disability to stand under the burden of it. Such as are querulous and discontented, and upon the fret, at every misfortune they meet with, take the ready way to make themselves miserable; at least much more so than they would otherwise have been; whereas 'tis easy to observe of those who are never dissatisfied, howsoever it pleases God to dispose of them, that if they cannot be said to be truly happy in their worst condition, yet it cannot be denied, that they are so in comparison of what these others would be in the like circumstances. This therefore is one unanswerable reason, why every one should compose himself to bear his afflictions to the best advantage; I mean with an unwearied patience, and resignation to God's most Holy Will. The other I intended to mention is, secondly, Because we know not whether what we wish removed, be a real cause of grief or not, and whether it be not rather designed as a kindness, and like to prove so in the event, as being introductive of some greater good, whether

(q) *Sapiens, inquit Epicurus, semper beatus est; & vel inclusus in Phalaridis tauro hanc vocem emittet, Suave est, & nihil curo. Lançant. Instit. l. 3. c. 27.*

(r) Cum solatii a Stoicis magnam illi materiam superesse quispam infusurraret, Illa sunt vana, respondit; digitoque in Christi crucifixi imaginem prope astantem intento, Hæc est, inquit, vera patientia. Mox magno spiritu subjecit, Domine Jesu, da mihi patientiam christianam. *Drexel. de Aeternit. Confid. 4.*

temporal

temporal or eternal, than the sufferer would otherwise have attained to. We poor short-sighted mortals are very apt to mistake our friends for our enemies, and to think ourselves hardly dealt with, when the greatest kindness is intended us, and hence inexcusably complain of the usage we meet with; and this not only in relation to one another, but to the determinations of the Divine Providence concerning us; when a little time convinces us, that our own choice, if granted, would have left us in a far worse condition.

Philog. That must needs be, unless we are capable of foreseeing all the events of God's dispensation towards us, and could penetrate into his aim and intent in them. (s) *His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. For as the heavens are higher than the earth; so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.* And for not attending to this, the *Israelites* were deservedly to be chastized, as the prophet *Ezekiel* threatened them; (t) *Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.* And every one therefore ought to beware, that he fret not at God's disposal of him, as he would not incur the like rebuke, together with the heavy punishment, that may justly be expected to follow upon it.

Euseb. As this way of censuring God's dealings with his servants is impious, so I add, that it is highly unreasonable, upon another account. For this censorer knows not, whether what he most dislikes, will not prove a blessing to him in the end; as neither, on the other hand, whether what he most impatiently desires, if obtained, may not, in the event, become a fore misfortune to him. It was (u) *Rachael's* complaint, that she must die of grief and discontent, if she had no children. And yet the accomplishment of her desire in this respect was the certain occasion

(s) *Isa.* lv. 8, 9. (t) *Ezek.* xviii. 29, 30. (u) *Gen.* xxx. 1.

of her death. For tho' she bare one (*w*) son *Joseph* with safety, yet no sooner was she the mother of children by the birth of (*x*) *Benjamin*, but it cost her her life. And on the contrary who would ever have thought, that her son (*y*) *Joseph's* slavery and imprisonment in *Egypt*, should have been the means of advancing him to the second place in that kingdom? Yet this it most certainly was. Who would have imagined, that (*z*) *Moses* should be taken up by *Pharaoh's* daughter, and educated and owned by her as a son, by having been exposed to the wind and waves in the *Nile*? Or that (*a*) *Bion* should have an estate, by being sold into slavery? Or (*b*) *Themistocles's* exile should have procured his advancement in a foreign court, and give occasion for that triumphant profession of his, ὦ παῖδες, ἀπωλόμεθα ἂν, εἰ μὴ ἀπωλόμεθα, *O my children, if we had never been ruined, we had been utterly undone.*

Theoph. It cannot be denied, that mankind are oftentimes egregiously mistaken in their conceptions, in relation to the distributions of Providence, and their impatient either desires, or averfations, make them chuse very disadvantageously, too often destructively, to themselves: as might be confirmed by many instances, besides those now produced by *Eusebius*, had not these been sufficient of themselves. However, possibly it may not be amiss to illustrate this by an ingenious apologue; metaphors and parables, many times, making a more lasting impression upon the mind, than the closest and most demonstrative arguments.

Philog. I dare answer for all the company, that what you purpose will be very acceptable and obliging to them. And let me therefore beg that you will please to proceed.

(*w*) Gen. xxx. 23. (*x*) Chap. xxxv. 18. (*y*) Chap. xli. 41, 42, 43. (*z*) Exod. ii. 10. (*a*) Diog. Laert. in vit. Bionis. (*b*) Plut. in vit. Themist.

Anchitb.

Anchitk. Pray do. And I will give a due attention to it; as I have done to all that *Eusebius*, or any of you, has said upon this subject.

Theoph. There is a notable story in the writings of a late learned and reverend doctor of our church, that strikes my fancy in an unusual manner; and I hope therefore it will not be disagreeable to any of you.

Philog. Pray let us have it. You do not know what impression it may make upon *Anchitbanes*, or how much you may oblige any other of us by it.

Theoph. I will give you the best account of it I can at this time. So many years have passed since I read it, that I will not pretend to be exact in my rehearsal of it; but I am pretty confident I shall not forget any thing material in it, however I may possibly wrong it in the manner of telling. The story, in short, is this: * (c) A certain *eremite*, not well satisfied with the administration of this world, and its affairs, and the divers occurrences of Divine Providence in relation to it, resolved in this disorder of mind to quit his cell, and travel abroad to view the course of things, and make what observations he could, whereby to form a judgment of what had thus disturbed him. But he had not gone far, not above half a day's journey, if I remember aright, before he was overtaken by a young stranger, who came up to him, and joined company with him; who quickly insinuated himself so far into the *eremite's* affection, that he thought himself very happy in having so soon met with so suitable a companion. And as their journey lay the same way, they agreed together to eat and lodge always at one house, wherever they came. Some few days they had travelled, before the *eremite* took notice of any thing that occurred worthy of his observation. But at length he could not but be concern'd to see, that at a house, where they were very kindly and generously entertained, his fellow-traveller, with whom,

(c) Dr. H. More's divine Dialogues. Tom. 1. Dial. 2. Sect. 24.

in this time, he had contracted an intimate and endearing friendship, at his departure stole a gilt cup, and took it away with him. This was matter of no small astonishment to the poor *hermite*, that his friend, whom he so highly esteemed, and whom he thought a truly sincere Christian, should prove guilty of such apparent theft, and inexcusable ingratitude to one who had been so highly civil to them, and to whom therefore they had particular obligations. And he was resolved to see farther what his behaviour would be in other places, before he inquired any thing concerning it. Wherefore on they went as before, till at night they met with a house of as ill accommodations as the former was of good; where the owner, being a man of a morose inhospitable temper, refus'd to admit them within doors, though the rain, and other hard weather, made such a reception very desirable. So that they were forced to spend that night in the open court, in hardship and great uneasiness. and not without some hazard of their health. Yet such was the different carriage of this young traveller, towards this unmerciful surly man, that, in the morning, he rewarded all his inhumanity with this gilt cup, which he thrust into one of the windows, and there left it. This, you may easily suppose, was a sight no less surprising to the *hermite*, than the former; and he could not possibly fathom the mystery of so unequal a procedure. However, he still took no notice of it to his companion, though he could not forbear ruminating upon it in his thoughts. The next night they were treated with the like civility and kindness, as at the house from whence the cup was taken; but the return made for all their good entertainment was far worse than the former, and more astonishing: For, at their leaving the place, the *hermite* saw his companion privately strangle a little child, as it lay in the cradle, the only child of the family, and of which both father and mother were exceedingly

exceedingly fond, and in whom all their temporal happiness seem'd to be wrapped up. However, he prevail'd with himself to hold on another day; and at night they came to a house of the best entertainment they had met with yet. Where the master of the house not only received them with the highest civility, and accommodated them with whatever might either support or divert them, during their short stay there; but in the morning, because the way they were to go, was somewhat intricate, prevailed with them to accept of a guide, a servant, whom he had found very faithful and diligent, and whom he therefore loved and valued, as if he had been his own child. Thus they took their journey for a while; till, coming to a bridge, that crossed a deep and rapid stream, the young traveller, of a sudden, laid violent hands upon the servant, and threw him over into the water, and drowned him. Upon this the *hermite* could contain no longer, but passionately charged the other with his barbarous requitals for the favours they had received by the way, and the injustice and murder he had been guilty of, resolving to keep no more company, nor ever have any thing to do, with the author of such abominable wickedness; chusing much rather to confine himself again to his cell, and forbear the conversation of mankind, than see such heinous crimes committed, without any remorse, as if they were never to be accounted for. But now, behold as strange a sight of another kind! The young man, smiling at the honest zeal of the good devout *hermite*, and putting off his mortal disguise, appeared to him in the form and lustre of an angel of God; telling him, that he was sent to ease his mind of the perplexity and doubts he had so long labour'd under, as to the Divine Providence; in which, said he, nothing can occur more astonishing or unaccountable, than in what you have now seen, and are so uneasy at. With this the good man took
courage,

‘ courage, and resolved not to part with his compa-
‘ nion, till he should have learned the meaning of
‘ what passed so much to his disturbance. And the
‘ other immediately promised to demonstrate to him,
‘ that in reality nothing could be more just and equi-
‘ table than all this, which, for want of a right un-
‘ derstanding, had been so great, and almost insuper-
‘ able an offence to him. For, said he, As to the
‘ first man, from whom the glided cup was taken, he
‘ had the best compensation made him for all his
‘ kindneses, the cup having been an unhappy occa-
‘ sion of great mischief to him whilst he had it. He
‘ is a person of divers excellent qualifications, and
‘ exceedingly beloved amongst his neighbours, who
‘ are continually partaking of his bounty and friend-
‘ ship. But he has one failing that tarnishes all his
‘ good deeds, and that is, an inclination to company
‘ and drinking, more than becomes him, and espe-
‘ cially, whenever this cup is brought forth: so that
‘ the best office I could do him, was effectually to
‘ remove this temptation out of the way, that by this
‘ means he may be brought to a better government
‘ of himself; which is the greatest happiness that
‘ can befall him in this world, and most highly bene-
‘ ficial in order to another. For this reason I took
‘ care to ease this our worthy friend of what had been
‘ so unfortunate a snare to him. And I left it with
‘ the other rough, morose, inhospitable man, as a
‘ means of his destruction, and so a just reward of
‘ all his inhumanity, that by it he may fall into in-
‘ temperance, diseases, and death itself; there being
‘ that enchantment in this cup, that whosoever hath
‘ it, will be in danger of being thus bewitched by
‘ it. But perhaps you are at a stand to think of the
‘ little innocent babe, so unexpectedly strangled in
‘ the cradle, and at a place too, where we had been
‘ so civilly entertained. Know then, that this was
‘ done in great mercy to the parents, and no real
‘ hurt to the child, who is now with God in bliss and
‘ happiness,

happinefs. This gentleman, and his wife, had hitherto lived in great reputation for their piety, juſtice, ſobriety, and other chriſtian virtues. But, above all, their charity was moſt conſpicuouſly eminent; divers of their infirm and indigent neighbours owing their ſubſiſtence, next under God, to their beneſcence. But, ſince the birth of this child, their minds have, by degrees, degenerated and funk into a love of this world; and, inſtead of providing for the poor and helpless, as formerly, their thoughts have been employed how to enrich themſelves, and leave a plentiful fortune to this infant, and its poſterity. Hence it was, that I took away this momentary life from the body of the child, that the ſouls of the parents might live for ever. And I appeal to yourſelf, whether, all things conſider'd, this was not an immense kindneſs, and an act of the trueſt friendſhip to them? But ſtill there remains one thing more to be accounted for; this laſt fact againſt which you have declared ſuch a violent deteſtation. And, as bad a notion as you have of it, this let me tell you, was the moſt faithful inſtance of gratitude I could pay, to one who had uſed us with the utmoſt humanity and kindneſs. For this ſervant, whom his maſter ſo highly valued, was a very rogue; and was in a conſpiracy to have, this very night, let in a company of thieves, to rob and kill his maſter; and, perhaps, his whole family. Which having ſaid, he immediately vaniſhed, leaving the good man to meditate with himſelf upon what had paſſed, and the reaſons given for it: who, hereupon, tranſported with joy and amazement, lifted up his hands and eyes to Heaven, and gave glory to God, who had thus unexpectedly deliver'd him from any farther anxiety touching the ways of his Providence. And, being now fully ſatiſfied, as to the Wiſdom of all God's dealings with us, and thoſe unſeen reaſons of them, which ſo far ſurpaſs the bounds of our finite ſhallow underſtand-
ings,

‘ courage, and resolved not to part with his compa-
‘ nion, till he should have learned the meaning of
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happiness. This gentleman, and his wife, had hitherto lived in great reputation for their piety, justice, sobriety, and other christian virtues. But, above all, their charity was most conspicuously eminent; divers of their infirm and indigent neighbours owing their subsistence, next under God, to their beneficence. But, since the birth of this child, their minds have, by degrees, degenerated and sunk into a love of this world; and, instead of providing for the poor and helpless, as formerly, their thoughts have been employed how to enrich themselves, and leave a plentiful fortune to this infant, and its posterity. Hence it was, that I took away this momentary life from the body of the child, that the souls of the parents might live for ever. And I appeal to yourself, whether, all things considered, this was not an immense kindness, and an act of the truest friendship to them? But still there remains one thing more to be accounted for; this last fact against which you have declared such a violent detestation. And, as bad a notion as you have of it, this let me tell you, was the most faithful instance of gratitude I could pay, to one who had used us with the utmost humanity and kindness. For this servant, whom his master so highly valued, was a very rogue; and was in a conspiracy to have, this very night, let in a company of thieves, to rob and kill his master; and, perhaps, his whole family. Which having said, he immediately vanished, leaving the good man to meditate with himself upon what had passed, and the reasons given for it: who, hereupon, transported with joy and amazement, lifted up his hands and eyes to Heaven, and gave glory to God, who had thus unexpectedly deliver'd him from any farther anxiety touching the ways of his Providence. And, being now fully satisfied, as to the Wisdom of all God's dealings with us, and those unseen reasons of them, which so far surpass the bounds of our finite shallow understandings,

ings, he returned with chearfulness to his forsaken cell, and spent the residue of his days there, in piety and peace.

Philog. It is an excellent story, indeed, *Theophilus*; and so much to the purpose, that nothing could be more.

Euseb. This shews, beyond all contradiction, how short-sighted we poor mortals are; and how unable to judge of the aim, and intent, of the Divine dispensations towards either ourselves, or others. We are apt to think ourselves very wise; but, alas! should God see fit to leave us, but a very little time, to our own management and choice, we should quickly see cause to bewail our folly; and beg, and pray, and intreat of him, to take the care of us again into his hand. We think ourselves, with *Phaeton*, able to govern the chariot of the sun; but, if entrusted with it, should find the effect of our presumption, as he did of his, to be only ruin and destruction. As also, on the other hand, when we think ourselves in the most forlorn circumstances, we yet know not what blessings are reserved for us; and how even these our calamities may be made a step and introduction to them.

Anchitb. You say very true, *Eusebius*; and *Theophilus*'s story has so clearly illustrated the matter, that I most heartily return him my thanks for it.

Theoph. I am very glad to hear this from you, because I was afraid I had quite tired you with it; especially since coming at the latter end of the day, when you might be presumed desirous to be left to yourself. But now it is time for us to retire, and wish you a good night's rest, and that you may find no inconvenience by the long disturbance we have given you.

Anchitb. Pray, good *Theophilus*, let me intreat you by no means to think that a disturbance to me, which I frankly acknowledge to have been a favour and a kindness.

Euseb.

Euseb. I hope you will pardon us, if we have made too bold with you, considering your present indisposition, since you know we could have no other design in it but to serve you.

Anchitb. Indeed, gentlemen, I cannot think of parting with you yet. I am very sensible of the kindness of this charitable visit, and own myself to be highly obliged to you for it. And I must confess, I find myself refresh'd and enliven'd to a great degree, by your useful and instructive discourse, ever since you came, and your seasonable application of so many passages of Scripture to my circumstances; for which I heartily thank you all. Yet this I must add, that I am much afraid, lest the application belong not to me. For I dare by no means compare myself to those famous worthies you have been mentioning, *Joseph, David,* and *Job*. These were illustrious servants of God, and eminently religious in their *generations*; whereas my conscience tells me, that I, being a poor, wretched, guilty sinner, who from time to time have highly offended my good and gracious God, can have no title to those promises which were made to such as these, nor any just ground to expect the like favourable usage with them. These holy men were afflicted out of pure kindness and mercy, for the vindication of their faith and constancy, and that they might appear noble examples of an unwearied fidelity to those that should come after them. But alas! what am I, poor creature, that the Lord, whom have I so provok'd, should have any regard for me? This uncomfortable reflection damps my joy, and robs me of that inestimable satisfaction I must needs otherwise have found, in what you have so pertinently suggested. Not that I do now doubt, in the least, of God's goodness to his faithful servants, but only that I see too much cause to distrust my own qualifications for his favour. The best of my performances have been so lame and imperfect, and the whole course of my life has been so defil'd with blacker and too, too oft with wilful and
known

known sins, that I have too much reason to suspect this sickness to be laid upon me as a punishment for such my guilt. And I cannot perceive why you should not also be of the same opinion.

Euseb. Admit it: yet you have no reason to conclude it sent only for this end.

Philo. It is not above a fortnight or three weeks, since I heard our doctor preaching upon these words, *Rom. iv. 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* And what he said made such an impression upon me, that I could not forget it, and I hope I never shall. His discourse was, as you may easily suppose, concerning remission of sins. And shewed us, *first*, That it is God alone who forgives sins; he can and does forgive them, when he sees just occasion for it, and he alone can do it. *Secondly*, That Christ is the only meritorious cause of this forgiveness; and it is purely through his mediation that we can hope to obtain it. *Thirdly*, That however such a faith in him, as produces a true and unfeigned repentance on our part, is requir'd as an absolute indispensable condition of this forgiveness. And here he made these two farther observations: *First*, That without repentance there is no hope of pardon, even though a man had not fallen into gross and scandalous sins, but only gone on in the heedless neglect of his duty, (*d*) like the foolish virgins, in our Saviour's parable; (*e*) or the unprofitable servant, who hid his master's talent in a napkin. And then, *secondly*, That though a man had been a great sinner, yet upon a true repentance he might promise himself forgiveness. Though he had been guilty of gross and enormous crimes, (*such as we can none of us conceive Anchithanes to have ever been guilty of*) yet, upon his forsaking them, his sight of and sorrow for them, and a care to walk more uprightly for the future, together with a serious and steady dependence upon God's mercy, through the merits and intercession of our blessed Redeemer, God

(*d*) Matth. xxv. 3, &c.

(*e*) Ver. 24, 25.

will be reconciled to him, and will own him for his faithful disciple and servant. And at last he concluded with these comfortable words, worthy to be written in letters of gold, and set up in all places, that every one may have them continually in his eye, and which particularly suit *Anchitbanes's* case, that **HEAVEN-GATES ARE NOT SHUT AGAINST THOSE THAT FALL INTO SIN, BUT AGAINST THOSE THAT LIVE IN IT.**

Euseb. Excellently spoken by the doctor, and now as pertinently remember'd by *Philogeiton*!

Theoph. There is nothing more plain, in the whole word of God, than that repentance, and forgiveness of sins, are inseparable companions; and he that has the one as he ought, shall be sure not to miss of the other. To this purpose speaks God himself by the prophet *Isaiah*, (f) *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.* And then, as the happy effect of such a change, he adds, (g) *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.* And again, (h) *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And by the prophet *Ezekiel*, (i) *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* And again to the same purpose, (k) *When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, if the wicked restore*

(f) *Is. i. 16, 17.*

(g) *Ver. 19, 20.*

(h) *Chap. lv. 7.*

(i) *Ezek. xviii. 27, 28.*

(k) *Chap. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16.*

the pledge, give again that he hath robbed, walk in the ſtatutes of life without committing iniquity; he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. None of his ſins that he hath committed ſhall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he ſhall ſurely live. And in the New Teſtament, (l) *Repent ye*, ſays St. Peter, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out. And at another time, ſpeaking of our bleſſed Saviour, (m) *Him*, ſaith the apoſtle, hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveness of ſins. And, to omit divers other places, (n) *There is joy in Heaven*, ſays our Saviour, over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, that need no repentance.

Euseb. There is nothing more evident, than that pardon and ſalvation are promiſ'd in the Goſpel, ſometimes to faith, and ſometimes to repentance; both which therefore ſeem to me, to be frequently uſed metonymically, and ſo, in the ſcripture-language, to means oftentimes the ſame thing. For a true faith is ſuch a belief in Chriſt, and dependence upon him for ſalvation, as produces a ſincere and unfeigned repentance. And a ſaving repentance is ſuch as proceeds from a belief in Chriſt, and is accompanied with a hope of ſalvation through him alone. Such a faith therefore, or ſuch a repentance, call it whether you will, is recommended to us by our Saviour and his apoſtles, as a moſt neceſſary qualification for mercy and pardon here, and eternal felicity hereafter.

Theoph. Wherefore, dear *Anchithanes*, it is matter of your ſerious conſideration, whether the ſenſe of your own unworthineſs in the eyes of God be not an argument of a penitent heart, a meek and quiet, an humble and reſigned ſpirit, (o) *which is in the ſight of God of great price*. It is true, no man is pure and undefiled before God, there being (p) *none righteous* in this ſenſe, *no not one*. (q) *Who can ſay, I have made*

(l) Acts iii. 19. (m) Chap. v. 31. (n) Luke xv. 7. (o) 1 Pet. iii. 4. (p) Rom. iii. 10. (q) Prov. xx. 9.

my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? It is a melancholy reflection for the best of men, that (q) in many things we offend all. (r) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (s) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. So that (t) there is not a just man upon earth, who doth good, and sinneth not. (u) By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. We are all of us at best (x) but unprofitable servants; and should have still been so, tho' we had been able to perform all that is commanded us; for so we had done but what was our duty to do. But I would to God this were the true state of the case, that we had done no more than was incumbent upon us, as necessary duty. It is sad to think, on the contrary, we are so far from having done this, that none of us but has multitudes of sins of commission to be accounted for, for which (y) if God will contend with us, not one of us can answer him, or excuse himself for one of a thousand. It was the peculiar prerogative of our great High-priest, the ever-blessed Jesus, to have been (z) tempted in all points like as we are, and yet to have passed his whole life without sin. (a) All flesh besides have corrupted their way before God. (b) And if he should be extreme to mark what were done amiss, none could abide it; (c) nor should any man living be justified in his sight. Consider, with yourself the weakness and infirmity of human nature, and how prone all are to go astray from their duty; and you will presently see reason enough for that expostulation (d) of Bildad, how can man, the best and most upright of men, consider'd in himself, without the mediation of a Saviour, how can he be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight; having no

(q) James iii. 2. (r) 1 John i. 8. (s) Rom. iii. 23. (t) Eccl. vii. 20. (u) Rom. v. 12. (x) Luke xvii. 10. (y) Job ix. 3. (z) Heb. iv. 15. (a) Gen. vi. 12. (b) Psalm cxxx. 3. (c) Psalm cxliii. 2. (d) Job xxv. 4, 5, 6.

brightness or lustre in his presence. *How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm?* We have all abundant reason to pray with the humble publican, (e) *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*; and in the words our blessed Lord has put into our mouths, to supplicate and beseech Almighty God, of his infinite mercy to (f) *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Euseb. If you look back to those very worthies I took occasion to mention to you, how oft does *David*, the man after God's own heart, confess himself a grievous sinner! How does he flee to God, and humble himself at his footstool, and sue, and beg, and pray, and intreat, for the forgiveness of his manifold iniquities! How does he disclaim all confidence in himself, and betake himself only to the mercy and goodness of God, for acceptance with him! To instance in particulars to this purpose, would be to repeat a great part of his book of *Psalms*, which are full of expressions of this nature, from one end to the other! But these being not only in every one's hand, as the rest of the Bible, but being order'd by our church to be read over every month, in its publick service, I will not suspect any one here so little acquainted with this seraphick part of the Holy Scriptures, as to need being put in mind of what is so plainly and fully contain'd in it. And *Job*, on whom God had bestow'd so glorious a character, in the two first chapters of his history, yet durst not pretend to insist upon his own innocence, but only upon the clemency of God, for safety. (g) *If I justify myself, says he, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse.* And a little after, (h) *I am afraid of all my sorrows: I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? If I wash myself in snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes*

(e) Luke xviii. 13. (f) Matth. vi. 12. (g) Job ix. 20. (h) Ver. 28, 29, 30, 31.

shall abhor me. Wherefore, good *Anchitbanes*, take heart, and do not despond, by reason of your past transgressions. Let not *Satan* tempt you to despair, as if there were no mercy for you, and you had no longer any right to God's promises; but seek rather to make out your title to them, by humbling yourself in his presence, with unfeigned purposes and resolutions of a better obedience for the future, so far as ever you shall be able. Confess and bewail your wickedness, and pray for pardon and forgiveness thro' the prevailing merits of our most compassionate and all-powerful Redeemer. And assure yourself, such your petitions shall not return unto you void, but shall accomplish your desires, and prosper in the thing whereto you send them. (i) For the Lord is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness. The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works. (k) The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness. He will not always be chiding, neither keepeth his anger for ever. His merciful goodness endureth for ever and ever, upon them that fear him: and his righteousness upon childrens children. (l) Oh trust in the Lord, for with the Lord is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

Anchitb. Oh my heart, my bowels, and all within me! What a dreadful pain did I just now feel! God be merciful to me.

Euseb. Be of good comfort; and trust in God, that he will turn all to the best. Yet hence you may observe, what frail feeble creatures men are, and how small a matter serves to discompose the frame of our mortal nature, and put all out of order.

Anchitb. I find it so by sad experience. But I thank God, I am now pretty well at ease again; and, if I should not be over-troublesome, would beg of some good friend amongst you to satisfy me, that if God punish me in this world for my sins, this is not

(i) Psalm cxlv. 8, 9. (k) Psalm ciii. 8, 9, 17. (l) Psalm cxxx. 7, 8.

a more probable token of his anger, than of his favour to me.

Theoph. This is too hasty a conclusion, with which you so torment yourself, as I shall shew it to be in due time. But first, give me leave to ask you a previous necessary question.

Anchith. Ask what you please, and I will be sure to answer you in the sincerity of my heart.

Theoph. What judgment does your parish-priest make of your repentance, and the state of your soul? He should be much better able to satisfy you in this point, than any of us; both as he is better skill'd in inquiries of this nature, and as it is to be presum'd, you have thoroughly acquainted him, with all your doubts and fears, and the grounds and reasons of them; which you know we are strangers to. What says he to this point?

Anchith. Nothing at all; for I have never asked his opinion concerning it.

Theoph. How! Never asked his opinion! You very much surprize me. I could not have thought it possible, that you could live so near him, for so long together, and have such freedom and intimacy with him in other respects, and neither well, nor sick, advise with him about the great concerns of eternity.

Anchith. I was afraid of being too troublesome to him.

Theoph. Let me ask you then again: Do you not remember that injunction of the apostle St. James, (m) *Is any sick? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, &c.* Or is it none of your business to attend to his directions? And tell me, I beseech you; does this fear keep you from troubling the lawyer, when your estate is in danger, or the physician in time of sickness? Or is an eternity of infinite either happiness or misery, of less concern to you, than this short uncertain life, and its perishing enjoyments? Besides, *Theodorus* is a very good man,

(m) James v. 14.

and

and takes care of his charge. And I know him so well, that I dare answer for him, he would esteem it a kindness rather than a trouble, to give him an opportunity of assisting you in the weighty affairs of the other life. I have heard him complain of it as a great discouragement, that of all this large parish so few have ever come to him for his direction. He is not content with the diligent discharge of his office in publick, but would heartily rejoice in having an opportunity of conversing in private with any of his parishioners, that would lay their case before him; and would be sure to give them the best resolutions he should be able, of all their doubts, and the fittest instructions for the management of their lives here, and the preparation they are to make for another hereafter. Nor can any one take a more effectual course, for promoting his own eternal salvation, than by thus disclosing his weaknesses and faults, difficulties and dangers, in order to a cure, when in his greatest health and vigour. But when sickness comes, and death threatens a man, he is in a peculiar manner engaged to seek for all the assistance that can be had; and to this end to acquaint his spiritual physician with the maladies of his soul, after the same manner, as he would the doctor or surgeon with the diseases or sores of his body; that so, whensoever death shall seize him, he may by no means be unprovided for it. For this reason it is, that our church directs, *when any person is sick, notice shall be given to the minister of the parish*, to the end he may come and visit him; and very justly, this being a season wherein his help is more especially required, upon account of the near relation that is betwixt sickness and death; because there is then a more especial need of his prayers; and because, moreover, the sick person is ordinarily more attentive to the advice given him for the good of his soul, than those who seem at a greater distance from their latter end; whose thoughts are taken up

L 3

with

with those ordinary temporal affairs, wherein men are generally too deeply immersed.

Anchith. I own my fault, and will take care to mend it. It is now about his time of prayer; but, if God spare my life till the afternoon, I will beg the favour of a visit from him; and will freely unbosom myself to him; and, I hope, I shall not repent of it.

Euseb. Take my word for it, you will not.

Philog. You had best send immediately, before he go to church, to beg his prayers for you there, and those of the congregation; and then let him know, that you would intreat him to see you in the afternoon, as soon as with convenience he can.

Anchith. Then I must give you the trouble of calling my servant, and sending him.

Philog. I will do it without delay.

Theoph. You must resolve beforehand, to deal plainly and sincerely with him, and conceal nothing that lies upon your conscience, or wherein you want his direction, but to give him a true state of your case. And then it will be his care, to tell you how far you are right, and where you have mistaken your way; whether you are found in the faith, regular in your deportment, hearty and fervent in your devotions, and how you may best rectify whatsoever is amiss in any of these respects. He will examine into your disposition for leaving this world, and your title to a better; that so you may be able to make a judgment, how it is like to fare with your immortal soul; will pray with you, for the pardon of your sins, thro' our Saviour's mediation; and for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, duly to qualify you for whatsoever shall be determined for you; and, at last, if he see just grounds for it, will, according to the authority committed to him by his Lord and Master, and in obedience to the church's command, upon *your humble and hearty request*, pronounce to you the comfortable words of absolution; that so, if it shall please God to take our good friend from amongst us, you may

may depart in peace, with a quiet conscience, and a sure title to a far better estate in the mansions of bliss and glory; (n) that *when your earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, you may have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Anchitb. I am heartily ashamed and grieved, that I never consider'd this before. I am sensible it has been a great neglect, that I have not made better advantage of so useful a guide, so faithful a minister of God's word, and so effectual a help in the important concerns of my soul. And if it please God to prolong my days, I will take especial care to avoid the like folly for the future. At present, I will wait with patience for his coming, when he shall be at liberty.

Theoph. I hope you will pardon the freedom I have taken with you; and I thank you for so readily hearkening to my advice; and, I am satisfied, you will soon be sensible of the benefit of it. In the mean time, I should proceed to consider the doubt you but now started; that the punishment God lays upon you in this world, is a more probable token of his anger, than of his favour, towards you; but that I find we have tired you too much already, and it is therefore high time that we now take leave of you.

Euseb. Let us therefore withdraw; I am sure it must be proper for *Anchithanes* that we do.

Anchitb. I cannot deny but my spirits are low, and I am no company for you. But yet, gentlemen, I cannot part with you, unless you will be so kind as to appoint another meeting here in a few days; that, if it please God to spare my life till then, I may partake of some other of your comfortable and useful observations; and particularly, as to the doubt now mentioned concerning God's hand upon me at present. I am not able to express my gratitude for the benefit of this kind visit: and it will be a considerable alleviation of my pains, if I may but promise myself some other doses of the same reviving cordial.

(n) 2 Cor. v. 1.

L 4

Euseb.

120 *Of Patience under Sicknefs, &c.*

Euseb. Since the discourse you have heard has met with so favourable a reception, I shall be ready, at any time, to give my attendance, and do you the best service I shall be able.

Theoph. And I most willingly.

Philog. I am sure I shall be as desirous of another such interview, and some farther like conversation, as you can possibly be; and therefore shall by no means absent myself, if I have life and health, and be not inevitably prevented.

Anchitb. I most heartily thank you all. But when may I hope for this favour?

Theoph. It shall not be long before you are troubled again with our company: and we will settle the time amongst ourselves.

Anchitb. I am much obliged to you all. And I hope you will not fail of being as good as your words, and in as little time as may be.

Euseb. You need not fear us.

Anchitb. I have had too much experience of your goodness to question it. But my great desire of more of the same entertainment, puts me upon thus pressing you to confirm your promise.

Euseb. Almighty God have you in his protection, that, whether you grow better or worse, live or die, you may be intitled to an interest in his favour, and the manifold blessings he has prepared for his beloved.

Philog. I am loth to leave my kind neighbour; but I think it now more than time for you to try, if you can recover your spirits, too much exhausted by so long a visit.

Theoph. Dear *Anchitbanes*, it is necessary we should take leave of you; but it will not be long ere we renew your trouble. In the mean time, we shall be sure to pray for you: and so we commit you to the Divine protection.

The End of the Second VISIT.

The

The Third VISIT,

By *Theophilus* alone.

The good Man's Settlement of his Temporal Concerns.

Theophilus. MY dear friend, we have appointed to be with you three days hence; but yet passing not far from you, I could not have pardoned myself, if I had not come a little out of my way to inquire after you: and I am heartily rejoiced to find you so much better than we left you.

Anchithanes. You are very kind in thus concerning yourself for me. But pray how do you know I am so much better? You find me where you left me; and why do you think me amended?

Theoph. You look more chearfully, and seem easier than you were. But the chief cause of my congratulation is, that as I came, I had the good fortune to meet with *Theodorus*, who gave me a good account of you, and that he took you to be in a fair way of recovery: for which you may be sure I could not but be very glad.

Anchith. It is like yourself to share in the welfare or affliction of your friends; and I return you a thousand thanks for this, and all your favours.

Theoph. I was heartily glad too, to find that *Theodorus* had been with you.

Anchith. He is very kind indeed. He has been here three times in these two days, since I had the happiness of your last visit; and has promis'd to see me again in the evening.

Theoph. And are you still of opinion, that he thinks it a trouble to attend upon you, or is displeased, that you sent to desire his assistance?

Anchith.

Anchitb. His readiness to visit me, effectually shews the contrary ; and makes me ashamed, that I have had no better thoughts of him.

Theoph. I hope you have been so much your own friend, as to deal freely and openly with him, and acquaint him with all your doubts, together with the reasons of them ; and in short, that you have impartially laid before him the whole state of your soul, and taken his judgment upon it.

Anchitb. To tell you the truth, I had some difficulty in exposing my shame before him ; but by degrees I brought myself to it, and have dealt very frankly with him. And I thank God, that I did so ; for I find my mind much more at ease since ; and I hope his pious assistance will be of everlasting advantage to me.

Theoph. Are you at any time ashamed to tell your physician the nature of your distemper, in order to a cure ?

Anchitb. I know no reason for that.

Theoph. Is not the case then the same in relation to your spiritual physician, the doctor of your soul ? And why should you not be as free with him ?

Anchitb. Because my sickness is the effect of my natural constitution, or perhaps, in some cases, the stroke of God's immediate hand upon me.

Theoph. Not always so ; but too often sickness, and death itself, are the effects of man's own vices and folly. But I do not any way suspect this to be *Anchitbanes's* case, and therefore you may please to proceed.

Anchitb. Sickness, I say, ordinarily speaking, is what we cannot avoid, and therefore may justly be sorry for it, but have no cause to be ashamed of it : but my sins are my own faults, and so cast a very ill reflection upon me, and are a strong temptation to study how I may most securely conceal them. And this made it so hard for me to discover them. I was afraid, lest I should lose *Theodorus's* good opinion of me for ever ; and if he should ever speak of them to others,

others, as we are generally too apt to do, I should not know how to shew my face abroad, if it should please God to restore me to my former health, as I begin now to hope he may.

Theoph. O, Sir, you seem a great stranger to this sort of penitential proceedings. The priest is strictly obliged not to discover what he is told in confession: and he must be a very inconsiderate man, and no way deserving his sacred character, who will do it. So that you need be in no pain upon that account: for you may rest assured, that one of *Theodorus's* piety and prudence, and diligent care of his parish, will never be guilty of so highly indiscreet and irregular an action, as to divulge what is thus secretly committed to him in confession; tho', if it were to have been, I leave it to yourself to determine, whether it be not far more eligible, to be condemn'd for your miscarriages by men at present, than by Almighty God at the last day. And then, as to *Theodorus's* own private opinion and esteem of you, neither need you fear losing this, by any freedom of this nature you may have taken, were your sins much fouler and more aggravated than there is reason to suppose they are. For if (a) *there is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth*, how should it enter into your head to imagine there should not be joy likewise upon the same account, amongst all the good men that are let into the secret of it? Had your sins been ever so heinous, abundantly more so than I can possibly expect of my *Anchithanes*, the good man, upon the notice of them, would presently conclude this discovery to proceed from a thorough conviction of the evil and danger of them, and a hearty sorrow and contrition for them, and so would rather honour and love you for your repentance, than slight or undervalue you for such former miscarriages: which now he no longer looks upon as your's, because he knows you have renounced them, and sought to God for the pardon of them, and re-

(a) Luke xv. 7, 10.

solved

solved by his grace and assistance watchfully to refrain from them for the remainder of your life.

Anchith. He has promis'd me, never to let what he has heard from me to be known to any one. And I hope he will be as good as his word.

Theoph. My life for your's, he will. And let me therefore prevail with you, never to give yourself the least pain in that respect. Whatever you have acquainted him with, depend upon it, all is safe as if it were yet concealed in your own breast. But pray tell me, did he not take it very kindly, that you sent to him?

Anchith. He thanked me over and over again, and told me he would not fail to be with me, as often as the other affairs of his parish would permit, till it shall please God either to restore me to health, or take me to himself.

Theoph. Then you must own I was in the right, in advising you to apply to him.

Anchith. I do so; I freely and thankfully acknowledge it.

Theoph. Believe me, he is one of those worthy divines, those faithful ministers of God, who *(b)* take heed to themselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; and of whom a most admirable author, as well as an indefatigable promoter of Christian piety and devotion, by his exemplariness of life in all respects, no less than by his excellent and useful writings, testifies, *(c)* that they would not only be content, but very much rejoice, to assist, in all *spiritual affairs*, such as shall make *applications* on these *accounts*; and would take it for a great comfort and encouragement to their labours, if they could find their *parishioners* ready upon all occasions, to consult them in the *concerns* of their *souls*, either for the *instruction* of their *ignorance*, or the *resolution* of their *doubts*, for *direction*.

(b) Acts xx. 28. *(c)* Mr. Nelson's Preface to the Companion for the Festivals and Fasts, &c. pag. 18, 19.

in order to the avoiding or withstanding temptations,
for their consolation under trials and afflictions, or for
the best method of obtaining pardon of their sins,
and quieting their consciences.

Anchitb. This is so natural a description of *Theodor-*
us, so far as I can judge, by what conversation I
have hitherto had with him, and the singular benefit
and comfort I have received by it, that it looks to
me, as if that worthy gentleman had had him par-
ticularly in his eye whilst he wrote this.

Theoph. You ought not to imagine that; for there
are many serious and devout gentlemen of the clergy,
that are equally ready to execute their office at all times,
and upon all occasions. However, you see by this time,
that the ministers of God are of some other use, than
purely to pray to God in the church, and to preach to
the people, and acquaint them with the nature, and
persuade, press and urge them to the conscientious ob-
servance of their duty, and to administer the sacra-
ments in publick. These are noble offices, and must
be acknowledged well worthy of a divine commission,
in order to the good success of them. But yet these
are not all the purposes, for which they are commission'd
and empower'd to act in God's name; but there
are, as I said, many other good uses to be made of
them.

Anchitb. Good uses! Yes; admirable uses indeed.
And so I now find experimentally, to my no small com-
fort and benefit: for which I mightily condemn my-
self, that I had not understood it sooner. Had I made
the same advantage of *Theodorus's* conversation for-
merly, that I have done these two days last past, I
should have been far wiser and better, and quieter and
less disturbed in my mind, and fitter for either this
or the other life, than I have been. For he has not
only prayed effectually and fervently with me, and for
me, but has examined, and advised me, from time to
time, to examine my own soul, and see what judgment
I am to pass upon myself, what grounds I have for a
deep

deep humiliation and repentance, and what for a sure trust in God, thro' Christ; what opinion I ought to have of this transitory life, and its unsatisfactory and perishing enjoyments, and what of the inconceivable glories of the other; as also what indispensable obligations I and all mankind are under, (d) *to labour not for the meat that perishes, but for that which endures to everlasting life*; more convincingly, than by all the sermons that I have ever heard him preach.

Theoph. You see therefore the advantage of private conversation with such a man. It is not to be supposed, his unpremeditated discourse should be really better than his studied sermons, wherein he had well considered beforehand, what he has to say. And that it proved more useful to you, might proceed, in part, from your present circumstances, which might not improbably make you more attentive to what he said, and so it might make a greater impression upon you, than at other times. For what I take to be the chief cause of the benefit you mention, from your conversation with him, is, that you had the convenience of propounding your doubts and scruples to him, and begging of him, to explain himself in any point, wherein you did not take him right at first; which is a liberty you could not have, when he spake from the pulpit.

Anchith. It may be so. But this I am sure of; what he told me seemed clearer to me, and more affecting, than any thing I ever heard from him before.

Theoph. I take it for granted, you will not forget to return your unfeigned thanks to God, for setting home what he said, upon your heart, to so good an advantage.

Anchith. By no means. I look upon it as a great mercy of God, and desire to be truly thankful to him for it, and to bless and magnify his holy name, for vouchsafing to take such care of me. My doubts, concerning my future state, are now in some measure

(d) John vi. 27.

satisfied; and I hope to have them more so, when he shall be a little better at leisure for it. He also promised to discourse me farther to-morrow, and then to administer to me the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whereby to create in me a closer union betwixt my soul and my Saviour; and then, upon my humble and hearty request, he gives me hope of receiving absolution for my sins. And, by God's grace, I am fully resolved never more to indulge myself in any of them, but to serve God in holiness, and newness of life, for what farther time I may have to spend here.

Theoph. A virtuous and truly Christian resolution! And may the Almighty give you grace immoveably to persist in it!

Anchib. These are the principal advantages I received from *Theodorus's* visits. But these are not all; for there is another of no small importance, tho' in no wise to be compared with what relates to my God, my Saviour, my soul, and eterniry. He has put me in mind of a great neglect of a different nature, that might have proved of very ill consequence, if it had pleased God to have snatched me away without warning; or if I had had time, but had not met with such a faithful monitor.

Theoph. I begin to suspect you had not minded to make a disposition of your temporal concerns, as every wise man ought to do.

Anchib. You have hit it. I confess I have put off making my will, till my latter end, as too many others do; and so was in great danger of leaving all in confusion, and very much contrary to my mind.

Theoph. This, as you say, is too general a fault, that men put off their wills, as they do their repentance, to a sick bed; and so, too frequently, never make them at all. But, since you are now sensible of the bad effects of such a neglect, I trust you will not defer it any longer, lest you should happen to die intestate, and your estate should descend otherwise than you intended; and perhaps a great part of it be spent in

in costly and destructive law suits; and moreover, lest such animosities arise hereby amongst those relations, whom you would most wish to live in friendship and mutual affection, as may never be quite healed whilst they live, or for some time afterwards. Some of them, also, may be exposed to extremity of want, when you are gone; whom a small seasonable legacy might relieve, and put into a way of living. And if any debts be owing, they may not be so punctually and duly, or at least, so timely paid, as they ought to be, for want of your directions concerning them. And in a word, more and greater inconveniencies might ensue for want of a will, than perhaps you are yet aware of.

Anchith. You say very right, good *Theophilus*.

Theoph. Besides, the Scripture itself teaches this duty, of settling our worldly concerns, before we be called to take our leave of them. For we not only find it recorded of the patriarch *Abraham*, (e) that he disposed of his estate before he died, the estate itself to *Isaac*, and legacies to the sons of his concubines; and noted afterwards of *Achitophel*, as an instance of common prudence, that he (f) *put his house in order*, before he went and hanged himself; that is, says Bishop *Patrick* upon these words, *he settled his affairs, and disposed of his estate*; but the prophet *Isaiab* was sent to King *Hezekiah*, with a positive commission to *set his house in order* before his death. For so it is written: (g) *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death; and the prophet Isaiab the son of Amos came to him, and said unto him, Thus, saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.* *Hezekiah* was like to die, and one requisite, you see, in order to his doing it aright, was first to *set his house in order*, or, in other modern terms, to make his will: a work which ought to be done by every one, who has any store of worldly goods to dispose of, and does not resolve, that they should all descend as the law directs, to the next heir or heirs; but which never can be done at all, if

(e) Gen. xxv. 5, 6. (f) 2 Sam. xvii. 23. (g) 2 Kings xx. 1.

not done before death comes; and hardly aright, and as it ought to be, if not before the man is very sick, and near his end. And accordingly (b) *Buxtorf* tells us of the *Jews*, that when any of them who happens to be dangerously ill, is visited whether by the *rabbi*, or other of his friends; if he be a rich man, their first advice to him is about the settlement of his *estate*. Our church, I confess, does not so, but allows the precedence to that which is of infinitely greater concern to the sick man, the care of his immortal soul. But then it subjoins this rubrick: *If we have not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonish'd to make his will, and to declare his debts, what he oweth, and what is owing to him, for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his executors*; adding, moreover, that men should be put in remembrance, to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health.

Anchith. I wish I had consider'd this sooner; for so I should have taken other measures than I have done.

Theoph. I add farther, it will be a satisfaction to yourself to think, that as you have been preparing for another state, that you may die in peace, and be everlastingly happy in a better world, so you have not been wanting to do your part, towards making your relations and friends, and whatsoever objects of your charity, as easy and happy as you can in this.

Anchith. Your reasons seem to me very just, and I have nothing to say against them. And I must therefore acquaint you, that I have already sent for my neighbour *Nomicus*, just before you came in; and, for aught I know, he may be in the house by this time.

Theoph. This should have been done before, it being the proper work of one in perfect health, when he is able rightly to consider all he does, and has most time for it, whereby both to do it the more completely, and to ease himself of the trouble of it, when he shall come to languish upon a sick bed; at which time he

(b) *Synag. Jud. c. 42.*

M

will

will be sure to have business of another nature upon his hands.

Anchith. I am now truly convinced of my error, in having deferred it thus long; and therefore think it time to do it now, without any farther delay. And if it shall please God to restore me to my health, which at present I see little reason to expect, and will not therefore trust to any hopes of it; if it should please God, I say, to restore me to my health, I will never be without a will by me, to prevent all the before-mentioned inconveniencies. I did not think my life to be so short, as I now apprehend it may be; and this made me more careless and dilatory than I ought by any means to have been.

Theoph. Wherefore now you see cause to blame yourself, for having so long trusted to so great an uncertainty; and to be thankful, that you was not totally disappointed by it. Now you may see, no man is sure of his life for any time; and none therefore but ought to have all things in readiness for a change, whensoever it shall come; as possibly it may very speedily. (i) *We know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

Anchith. I am so thoroughly sensible of my folly, that I will delay this necessary work no longer. Somebody there, desire our friend *Nomicus* to come up.

Theoph. Then, *Anchithanes*, I will take leave of you till *Thursday* next, when, as I told you, we have appointed to be here again, as you desir'd.

Anchith. I beg of you, by no means to leave me.

Theoph. A business of such a nature, as you are now going about, ought, for divers reasons, to be done with privacy: and it will therefore be best to leave you and *Nomicus* to yourselves: I called as I was passing not far off, to see how you were; but had no thoughts of interrupting any affairs you should have to dispatch.

Anchitb. I cannot let you go. I have nothing to order, but what you may very safely be privy to; and besides, I may stand in need of your advice; and therefore, pray let me beg your stay, if it be no inconvenience to yourself.

Theoph. You shall command me.

Nomicus. Sir, I am very sorry to find so worthy a gentleman, and whom we all most deservedly honour and esteem, in so weak a condition. I heard, Sir, you was pleased to send for me, and am come accordingly to receive your commands.

Anchitb. I thank you, Sir. Blessed be God, I am somewhat better than I was, but however, still, as you see, sick and weak, and know not how soon I may leave the world; and, being desirous, in the mean time, to make a disposition of what it has pleased Almighty God to give me in it, I sent to beg the favour of you of making my will. And I thank my God, I am as ready to leave these transitory enjoyments, as ever I was to receive them: and I cannot but be pleased in myself, to think, that ever since I came to the inheritance of them, I have always made them to serve, not to rule and govern me; and at all times could be content to part with them, whenever God's glory, or my neighbour's wants, required it of me.

Theoph. So St. John advises, (k) *not to love the world, neither the things of the world*; assuring us, moreover, that, *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. In like manner, as our blessed Saviour declares, it is (l) *impossible to serve God and Mammon*; and commands to (m) *make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations*. And that you have taken this course, appears from your indifferency as to these temporal good things, according to the doctrine of our blessed Lord; (n) *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*.

(k) 1 John ii. 15.

(l) Matth. vi. 24.

(m) Luke xvi. 9.

(n) Matth. vi. 21.

Anchith. I must own I have, in some measure, made this my study, tho' with a great many faults and failings: but I heartily wish I had done it more, and to better purposes.

—— But, if you please, we will begin.

Nom. It is great pity, Sir, this work is now to do. However, it is not yet too late; and therefore, if you will please to give me your instructions, I will take care faithfully to pursue them.

Anchith. Begin. *In the name of God, Amen. I Anchithanes, of the parish of A. in the county of B. an unworthy member of the church of Christ, as settled and reformed here in England, being through the abundant mercy and goodness of God, tho' weak in body, yet of a sound and perfect understanding and memory, do constitute this my last Will and Testament, and desire it may be received by all as such. Imprimis, I most humbly bequeath my soul to God my Maker, beseeching his most gracious acceptance of it, through the all-sufficient merits and mediation of my most compassionate Redeemer Jesus Christ, who gave himself to be an atonement for my sins, and is able to save to the utmost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them; and who, I trust, will not reject me a returning penitent sinner, when I come to him for mercy. In this hope and confidence I render up my soul with comfort, humbly beseeching the most blessed and glorious Trinity, one God most holy, most merciful and gracious, to prepare me for the time of my dissolution, and then to take me to himself, into that peace and rest, and incomparable felicity, which he has prepar'd for all that love and fear his holy name. Amen, blessed God, Amen.*

Theoph. I am glad to hear you speak so strongly, and hope you will be able to hold out, till you shall have finished this necessary and useful work. But I am much more glad to see you begin it so devoutly and religiously, as thereby to testify the good disposition of soul you are in, and the fitness you have brought yourself to, for quitting this transitory trouble-

troublesome wicked world, whensoever your time shall come.

Anchith. If I were not very serious and devout, now that I have a near view of eternity, and know not how soon, how very soon, I may be in it, when should I be so? I am sure the greatest concern I can possibly have, is to make my peace with God, and so to perfect my repentance for all my sins, and my reliance upon his mercy through Christ, as that I may have a well-grounded hope in him, whensoever my soul shall shake off this earthly body, and take its flight into another world.

Theoph. This, it is true, is each one's great concern; and there is none, how young, how healthful, how active, how lively, how strong soever, but ought to make it his continual care thus to prepare himself for a better state: much more are those, who lie upon a sick bed, called upon, to apply themselves to it with the utmost diligence, before it be too late.

Anchith. I thank God, I am not now to begin my repentance: it has been indeed the business of most part of my life, tho' with sorrow and shame I say it, too sadly defective in many respects. For which reason I am now desirous to complete it, and make it as perfect as I can, that so I may depart hence to the better advantage. But I believe he has written all I had directed: Have you not?

Nom. Yes, Sir; and am ready to proceed whenever you please.

Anchith. So I will then. I earnestly beg pardon of any I have offended, and am ready to make full restitution, if I have ignorantly wronged any one; for I am sure I have not knowingly. And, if any have abused or injured me, I freely forgive it.

Theoph. This is so necessary a part of Christianity, that there is no hope for any one to be saved without it. It is our blessed Saviour's own command, (o) *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest, that thy*

(o) Matth. v. 23, 24.

brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Tho' the gift were already with the priest, to be offer'd up by way of atonement for him that brought it, yet was no atonement to be expected by it, if he were guilty of any affront or wrong done to his neighbour, and had not some way made up the breach. And it is therefore our Saviour's direction, not to pretend to any such oblation, or to hope for any benefit by it, till the injured person have a due satisfaction given him. And if this be necessary at a man's coming with his gift to the altar, it must questionless be more so, when he's going out of the world, and will never more have it in his power to offer at a reparation. The least therefore a true penitent can do in that nice juncture, is to express his sorrow, and intreat forgiveness of any provocation or affront given to whomsoever. But if my neighbour be otherwise injured, by cheating, extortion, theft, or whatever sort of injustice, I must not only beg his pardon, but, if able, must make him full reparation for the wrong itself, and all the ill consequences that have accrued to him by it; as might be easily shewn from divers places of Scripture. (p) And as these are necessary parts of justice to such as I have offended or wronged; so, on the other hand, (q) I am no less required to be ready to forgive any that has offended me, and to come to easy terms with such as have any way defrauded or injured me, and are desirous of forgiveness. St. Paul instances in it as one evident means of our *walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*, that (r) *with lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering, we forbear one another in love*; and at another time requires to (s) *put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one*

(p) Gen. xliii. 12. Lev. vi. 4. and xxiv. 18. (q) Numb. v. 6, 7, 8. 1 Sam. xii. 1, 3. Nehem. v. 10, 11. Zec. v. 3, 4. Luke xix. 8. (r) Eph. iv. 1, 2. (s) Colos. iii. 12, 13.

another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, says the Apostle: so also do ye. And it is our blessed Saviour's positive determination in the case, that whosoever desires forgiveness from God Almighty, of his sins and transgressions against him, must be sure to clear the way to it, by forgiving his brethren their lesser offences against himself. (t) For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses: but, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.

Anchith. And I profess myself to die in the faith and communion of the church of England; the same faith that is taught in the Holy Scripture, that was profess'd and maintained in the first and purest ages of the church, and seal'd with the blood of vast multitudes of martyrs, and is contain'd in the three creeds now in use amongst us; and the most primitive and best communion now in the whole world.

Theoph. Hereby you will not only stand upon record as an orthodox christian, but do also bear a laudable testimony against the hereticks and infidels of our time, who are so indefatigably set upon undermining our common Christianity, and all revealed religion.

Anchith. You take it then to be a piece of justice I owe to myself, and to the religion I profess, and resolve, by God's grace, to die in, to make my profession of it at this time.

Theoph. I do so, and commend you for it. But will you please to go on?

Anchith. Now for my earthly part: be pleased to write; Next I give my body to the earth, from whence it was taken, in full assurance of its resurrection from thence at the last day, (u) when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption; (x) when the Lord Jesus Christ shall change it, that it may be fashion'd like to his glorious body, by the mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, that I shall then receive it again wonderfully improv'd

(t) Matth. vi. 14, 15. (u) 1 Cor. xv. 53. (x) Phil. iii. 20, 21.

and purify'd; not such gross, weak, perishing flesh and blood, as it has hitherto been, but infinitely both splendid and durable, like our blessed Saviour's glorified Body.

Nom. Will you not next give some orders about your funeral?

Anchitb. Yes. *As for my burial, I desire it may be decent, without pomp or state, at the discretion of my dear wife, and my executors hereafter named, who, I doubt not, will manage it with all requisite prudence.*

Theoph. Herein I perfectly approve of your direction: for, though a decent regard ought certainly to be paid to our departed friends, and no good man will or can think otherwise; yet, in my opinion, all excess this way is blameable, inasmuch as I cannot but think it far better to retrench from this, what may be handsomely spar'd, for the benefit of such as are living, that so the wants of some in necessity may be supplied by it.

Anchitb. That truly was my consideration; and for this reason I shall give somewhat the more to that good use. But, Sir, we interrupt you. Be pleas'd to add, *As to my worldly estate, I will, and positively order, that all my debts, which, to my comfort, are but few and small, be paid out of hand, if I don't live to pay them myself. For, as I never lov'd to keep poor people out of their money in my life-time, as little will I allow it after my death.*

Theoph. This is a very commendable article. And I wish all others would follow your example; to do justly, being both a necessary duty of natural religion, and a considerable part of Christianity as injoin'd in Scripture. In the Old Testament, says the prophet, (y) *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Where, doing justly, you see, is set in the front of the different qualifications requir'd of such as would approve themselves to God,

(y) Mic. vi. 8.

as his faithful servant. And in the New Testament the apostle directs (z) *To owe no man any thing, but to love one another*; and that (a) *no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter*; and for this weighty reason, (b) *for the Lord is the avenger of all such.*

Nom. It is done, Sir.

Anchith. To my dear and loving wife Sophronia, with whom I have lived very happily, and with mutual affection and fidelity, for many years, and by whom God has been pleas'd to give me several children, most of whom are gone to Heaven before me, but whereof three are yet alive, though I doubt not but that, she being a very good woman, and a true and sincere Christian, Almighty God will, according to his promise, be a husband unto her, and provide for her all things necessary for this life; yet, since he has blessed me with a convenient portion of temporal riches, to her I give, for term of life, this house wherein I now dwell, with all the furniture, and the lands and tene-ments that lie about it; and, after my death, to my only son Theodosius, and his heirs for ever. To whom I leave also, from the time of my death, my two other estates situate in the parish of N. he paying to each of his sisters, Charis and Hypomone, one thousand pounds. And if he die before them, and without issue, then his land (all but the value of one thousand pounds, which I freely empower him to dispose of as he shall think fit) shall descend and belong equally to these my two daughters. And I trust my wife will be mindful to bring them all up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as becomes a wise, and tender, and truly christian parent, and who hopes to be eternally happy with them in a better state.

Nom. At what time will you please your two daughters portions shall be due to them, if their brother live?

Anchith. Well thought of! At the age of one and twenty years, or day of marriage, which shall first happen; and interest at five per cent. in the mean time.

(z) Rom. xiii. 8.

(a) 1 Theff. iv. 6.

(b) Ibid.

Nom.

Nom. It shall be so. What will you please to have next?

Anchith. To my nephews, Pamphilius and Panaretus, I give each two hundred pounds, and to my niece Irene three hundred pounds. To my trusty servant Pistus I give twenty pounds, to Hermagathus ten pounds, and to each of my servants, that shall be so at the time of my death, five pounds. They have been careful of my business, and serv'd me faithfully; the good Lord reward them for it!

Nom. What more will you please to add?

Anchith. I think I have done as to these legacies. But let me not forget my poor debtors, who owe me some small matters; which, because they are in a low condition, and not well able to pay them, I freely remit them all, forgiving such my debtors, as I desire God should forgive my debts, for Christ's sake.

Theoph. But you spake of bestowing something in charity.

Anchith. I did so; and am bethinking myself of the right method of doing it: I would give five hundred pounds, but would willingly give it the best way I can, and so as may most effectually answer the design of giving it.

Nom. I hope, Sir, you will be liberal to the poor of this parish, so as that both the present and future ages may bless your memory.

Anchith. Kind to the poor! You mean to the rich! for this sort of gifts serves only to lessen the parish-rates, and so relieves not the poor, but spares those who are bound by law to relieve them: which is a practice I do not understand, and for which nobody shall blame me. But yet, that I may not seem to forget the place of my nativity, I give fifty pounds to be distributed according to the discretion of my executors, among such of my neighbours of this parish, as they shall apprehend to want some assistance, but who do not receive alms, nor have any allowance, from the parish. This I think to be true charity, though the other I can by no means reckon to be so.

Theoph.

Theoph. What do you think, my friend, of building an alms-house for some poor old men or widows? This will be a lasting charity, and a way to do good to posterity.

Anchitb. I do not condemn such as order their charity this way; but on the other hand, I commend their good intention in it. But yet I see these sort of donations sometimes quite taken away, by some artifice or other, though ever so firmly settled; and much oftener so grossly abused, and diverted from the design of the donor, that I have long thought there are much better ways for disposing of charity than this. I am not desirous of being noted by passengers as a benefactor, but am rather for giving what I have to bestow, so as that I may be sure of its coming to the hands of those for whom it is intended. And, for this reason, I have chosen to distribute the main of my charity in my life-time, when I might see the good effect of it, and might be sure it would not be placed on any, but as I design'd it should. And this method I the rather chuse upon another account likewise, because I always esteem'd it much truer charity, and far better becoming our holy profession, to give out of what I myself have and can use, than to keep all till I die, and then give, though more largely, from my heirs and executors, when I can enjoy it no longer. But I find I have overtir'd myself, and must therefore forbear for awhile.

Theoph. It is now time to leave you, that you may take some rest, lest you should not be able to finish all to-morrow, as I heartily wish you may.

Anchitb. Pardon me, good *Theophilus*, if I cannot be of your mind. *I know not what a day may bring forth;* and will not therefore defer a matter of this nature any longer than is absolutely necessary. But if you will please to take this gentleman into the garden, and gather the fruit you can meet with there, you will be very obliging: I beg also you will command any thing my house affords for your refreshment, till I hope by
God's

God's blessing I may be able to proceed; which if I be, I will give you notice of it, and will intreat your return.

Theoph. Possibly you may get a little sleep, when you are alone; and therefore I thank you for your civility, and shall withdraw with this worthy gentleman, till we receive your summons to give our attendance.

Nom. These gardens are fine, and lie, I see, in good order.

Theoph. Yes, they are very pleasant, and the fruits look temptingly. Will you please to gather what you like?

Nom. All that I have tasted is very good. I believe *Anchithanes* was wont to take delight in his garden, it is kept so handsomely, and so well stock'd.

Theoph. To order and manage a garden, is a very pleasing and a very inoffensive diversion, provided it be so managed as not to occasion too great an expence: and it is a noble entertainment, to view the wonderful works of nature, and observe and admire the infinite wisdom of that over-ruling Power, which causes such astonishing productions; to see what noble plants arise from a small seed, what delicate flowers open themselves, of what different forms and sizes, how charmingly enamelled with variety of delightful and lovely colours, how sweetly scented, how gradually rising to their perfection! what cooling and pleasant fruits offer themselves to our sight and taste, how entertaining, how useful; and this not only once or twice, or by accident now-and then, but from year to year, in a continual succession, the same seed constantly generating the same plant, leaves, and flowers, and the same stock, or root, or stone, the same blossoms and fruit. Who can sufficiently admire the excellence of that good Providence, which disposes all these things in so stupendous a manner?

Nom. What you say, is so manifest to all who take occasion to observe it, that we can never sufficiently admire

admire the wonderful contrivance of that plastick virtue, which annually presents us with such noble entertainment for all our faculties, gratifying our senses to a great degree, employing our understandings, exciting our gratitude, and filling our hearts with abundant matter of praise and thanksgiving to its Almighty Author.

Theoph. You say right. We can never duly bless and honour God, for all his goodness to us poor mortals; and, amongst other instances of it, in particular for what is shown in these wonderful productions of the earth. And it is therefore no small happiness, to be owner of so pleasant a place as this, which suggests such matter not only of diversion to our minds, but of more raised and devout meditations and thanksgiving.

Serv. Gentlemen, will you please to walk up? My master is just awake.

Anchith. This little sleep has refreshed me very considerably, so that we may proceed now, in the business we were upon.

Serv. I hope you may.

Anchith. Let *Theophilus* know I am ready, whenever they will please to walk up.

Serv. He is coming-up, Sir.

Theoph. My good friend, how do you find yourself, after the little rest you have had?

Anchith. My spirits are but low, but much better than when you left me; for, in truth, I was so heartily tired, I could hold out no longer. But now I have taken a sup of my cordial, and have got a short sleep; I am in great hopes I shall be able to finish, without any farther interruption.

Nom. You seem, Sir, to be resolved against any lasting charity.

Anchith. Not so neither. Against an alms-house I am; but if either of you will direct me to any other, such as I shall approve of, I am not resolved against it.

Theoph.

Theoph. What do you think of giving to the corporation for propagating religion in foreign parts?

Anchith. That is a noble design; I pray God bless and prosper it. But I have one objection against the management of that pious undertaking hitherto, which sticks with me, so that I cannot get it over.

Theoph. May I know what that is?

Anchith. It is what I have heard often lamented, and, I think, not without a great deal of reason, That no care has been yet taken to plant Bishops in any of our *American* colonies, to inspect the qualifications and behaviour of the clergy there; to ordain such as have had university-education amongst them, and whom they shall find fit to be sent into the Lord's vineyard; to confirm young persons, as the rubrick directs, before they be admitted to the Lord's supper; to censure notorious offenders; to patronize and encourage those, who shew a true zeal for God's glory, and are courageous and industrious in his service; and to perform all other episcopal offices amongst them. I never heard of any in the primitive times, whether orthodox, or hereticks, that reckoned themselves to be a church, till they had Bishops to preside over them, (and not at such a distance, as from hence to *America*) unless they were the *Aerians*; and these you know were censured as hereticks, upon this very account. For which reason, I hope I may be excused, if I do not give any thing to this truly commendable undertaking, till it be brought to better perfection; and, if it please God I live to see that, I shall be as ready to give my assistance to it, as any one.

Theoph. How do you like the thoughts of settling a charity-school in the parish here?

Anchith. I like that very well; but you know, we have not a great many poor children here. However, I intend to do something of that nature, but not with the sum now under consideration.

Theoph. Suppose you should give this money to the parish, to buy in coals in the summer, when they are
cheapest.

cheapest, to be sold out again to the poor, in winter, when they are dearer, at the same rate; or to purchase corn in a plentiful year, to lay up for them till a dearer, and let them have it then, at the same price.

Anchith. This some have done, to the seasonable relief of many indigent families, and with no great charge to themselves. And money thus left in trustees, if rightly employed, may prove a very laudable charity: but we have not so many poor in our parish, but that, with the help of their own endeavours, they may be easily provided for, by a reasonable addition from their abler neighbours.

Theoph. Let me ask again; what do you think of the universities?

Anchith. I was myself, for some time, an unworthy member of one of those learned bodies; and cannot but have a kindness for it ever since. But what do you advise to there?

Theoph. What if you should found another fellowship in the college you belong'd to?

Anchith. That college is very well endow'd already. But, besides, I have another very substantial argument against it; and that is, the money I design to give, being three hundred and fifty pounds, will not be sufficient for it.

Theoph. That is true. But it will make an excellent scholarship for some ingenious hopeful youth.

Anchith. It may serve very well for that. But what do you think of giving it to buy an advowson for the college?

Theoph. There I must readily concur with you, this being a way of preferring three at once, so oft as the benefice so purchased shall become vacant. Besides that, 'tis as likely a way as can be taken, to have the parish constantly well supplied. And, again, there are two other advantages in it; the one, that there is no fear of a college's disposing of it simoniacally, as private patrons too commonly do; the other, that this will

will be the most effectual way I can think of to secure the tithes from the invasion of a covetous patron; and especially, if the parish should ever happen to be inclos'd, which to my knowledge has been often the ruin of the parsonage, where the lord of the manor thus inclosed has been patron: divers instances whereof I could mention, now within the memory of man. And I think too great care cannot be taken against such notorious sacrilege.

Anchith. Pray, *Theophilus*, explain yourself, that I may understand how three came to be preferr'd at once.

Theoph. That I shall quickly do. For, first, a fellow being presented to the vacant benefice, a scholar is next promoted to his fellowship, and so room is made in the last place, for some other to succeed in his scholarship.

Anchith. You are in the right. And I am, accordingly, most inclinable to this way of doing good to all three. But what security is there, that the church will be well supplied by this means?

Theoph. Absolute security there is none, nor can be any way. But this way comes as near it as any; because the living falling to some person of good standing in the university, and whom the college have no material exception to, this is as sure a way as I can think of, to have the place well fill'd with a learned and worthy pastor.

Anchith. I am satisfied this will be a proper benefaction, if three hundred and fifty pounds would purchase a perpetual advowson of a benefice worth such a person's acceptance; but I fear it will not.

Theoph. I fear it too. But four or five hundred pounds perhaps will; and you may leave it either to the college, or in your executors hands, they giving security to the college for it, till the interest shall have made it up so much, or more, if necessary; and to be paid sooner, if they think fit to call it in; and have such a purchase, that they can any way make it answer your intended end.

Anchith.

Anchith. Will you please then to write, Sir?

Nom. What will you please to have written?

Anchith. Item, I give and bequeath to T. college, in the university of N. three hundred and fifty pounds, to purchase a perpetual advowson of a benefice, to be bestowed, as often as, by death, or otherwise, it shall become vacant, upon some fellow of the college, whom they shall think most proper, and who shall be obliged to quit his fellowship for it; and I order my executors to give security for the payment of that sum, together with its interest, at five per cent. so soon as the college shall be satisfied, that it will suffice for the intended purchase, and he can see it well laid out.

Nom. Here are, Sir, but four hundred pounds yet given.

Anchith. I know it, and am thinking of objects for the rest.

Theoph. What think you of *Eusebes*, vicar of N.? He is a very good man, both for his life and doctrine, and has a large family, and little to maintain them.

Anchith. You say right. Let him have forty pounds given him for putting forth his two eldest sons apprentices.

Nom. It is done.

Anchith. *Philotes* is a very good woman, but streightened in her circumstances since her husband's death: give her therefore ten pounds to defray the charges of her late sickness.

Theoph. Whom will you think of next?

Anchith. I have already thought of a fit person. My neighbour *Arotreus* is a very honest laborious man, but unsuccessful, and has several young children. Besides, he has lately lost a horse, and two cows, which has almost broken his back; and to set him up again, must needs be an act of great charity. Put him down twenty pounds.

Nom. It is done.

Anchith. What now remains of the five hundred pounds?

N

Nom.

Nom. Sir, you have already disposed of fifty pounds, three hundred and fifty, forty pounds, ten pounds, twenty pounds; together, four hundred and seventy pounds; so that there remain now thirty pounds to be order'd as you please.

Anchith. My tenant *Epimeles* is a very industrious man, and takes a great deal of pains, and maintains his family comfortably for the most part. But I doubt he goes' backwards in the world, and think therefore a small legacy may come very seasonably to him. *Give him ten pounds.*

Nom. I shall do it.

Anchith. My neighbour *Geron* is very aged and infirm, and a little support may, in all probability, be very welcome to him. *Give him ten pounds likewise.*

Nom. It is done, Sir.

Anchith. Now I think there are only ten pounds remaining.

Nom. No more, Sir.

Anchith. That I give to be laid out weekly by my executors, so long as it shall last, for teaching poor children to read, and say their catechism. Or if my neighbours will agree together, as they have been talking they would, for some time, to set up a *charity-school* for the children of the parish, betwixt this and *Candle-mas-day* next, I then order this ten pounds, or what shall be remaining of it at that time, whensoever it shall be, to be made up twenty pounds, for a beginning of so good a work.

Nom. Is this all, Sir?

Anchith. No; add farther, *The small remainders of my estate I give to my very good friends, and dear and kind relations, Eubulus and Aplastus, to be divided equally between them: and do constitute them executors of this my last will and testament, and trustees for my wife and children.*

Nom. It will be requisite, that you sign and seal your will.

Anchith. I need not direct you for that.

Nom.

Nom. Thus therefore I write, In witness whereof, I have hereto set my hand and seal, the third day of July, in the year of our Lord 1711. Now, Sir, will you please to sign it?

Anchith. I will do it as well as I am able. But pray first let me hear it read all over, that I may know what I sign.

Theoph. That is highly reasonable, if it will not be over-troublesome to you to attend to it.

Anchith. I will try what I can do. I am not very fit to attend to any thing; but yet, I hope I shall be able to observe and understand what is read. Begin therefore when you please.

Nom. In the name of God, Amen. I Anchithanes, &c.

Anchith. It is very right, and as I design'd it; and if you please to reach me it hither, I will sign it as well as I can. Wherefore I declare this to be my last will and testament, and beg of you to witness for me that I do so.

Witness.

Theophilus.

Nomicus.

Dulus.

Anchithanes.

Here I take off my seal; and do declare this to be my last will and testament.

Anchith. I think you have dated it right.

Nom. Yes, Sir, this third day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eleven.

Anchith. It is very well. And now, I suppose, all is done as it should be.

Nom. Sir, it is.

Anchith. Then, Sir, I thank you. *Dulus*, take care to satisfy the gentleman for the trouble I have given him. And now, my friend *Theophilus*, I have abundance of thanks to return to you, for having so long exercised your patience: I know I have been very troublesome to you; but I hope you will pardon the importunity of one who is not able to help himself, and has therefore need of the kind assistance of all his

friends ; especially since it is not long I am like to burden you.

Theoph. How long you may be in this condition, God only knows. Your acquaintance are such lovers of themselves, that they are willing to hope they may have the enjoyment of so worthy and dear a friend as yourself, for many years yet to come ; and do therefore all agree in praying for your happy and speedy recovery. However, you do well to think of, and make all the preparation you can for, a change ; that whensoever it shall come, whether now, or at a good distance hence, you may be always in a readiness for it. The fitter you are to die, believe me, the fitter you are to live ; and the more comfort and satisfaction you will find in yourself here, and will certainly be unspeakably the more happy for it hereafter.

Anchitb. I thank God, I have now done one part of my business, and thereby have eased my mind, as to all solicitude for the things of this world : so that, if it shall please God to take me away immediately, I may be sure what I leave behind me, will go to those who I desire should have it ; and so my relations, knowing what is their own, will have no grounds of quarrelling amongst themselves, as they might possibly have done, if I had died intestate.

A Prayer after having made his Will.

I Thank thee, O God, for thy great goodness and mercy towards me, in having so plentifully provided for my subsistence, during my abode in this world. Whilst others have been in want, I have been furnish'd with whatsoever my condition called for, and have had something also to spare, for the relief of my indigent neighbours ; such has been thy bounty towards me. And now, if thou seest fit to strip me of all I have hitherto enjoyed, by taking me away from it, thou deprivest me only of what thou so freely gavest me, and what I shall have no longer occasion for. Grant me therefore, gracious Lord, to part with it as willingly

to those that come after, as ever I received, either the whole, or any part of it, from such as are gone before. Bless it to those into whose hands I commit it, that it may serve both to their present, and their eternal welfare; that they may not only live the more comfortably for it here, but also therewith make to themselves friends, who, when they fail, may receive them into everlasting habitations. And grant to me, thy unworthy servant, that when my tottering earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, I may have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; and may be intitled to a better and an enduring substance there, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Theoph. I hope you are well satisfied with what you have done.

Anchith. It is some ease to my mind, to think that I have done as much as in me lies, to settle peace amongst my friends. But that which pleases me most is, to think that I have nothing now to do, but purely to apply myself to the weaning my affections from the things of this world, raising them up to those that are above, and the perfecting my repentance, and suing to God for the pardon of my sins, and an interest in his favour, thro' the powerful mediation of my blessed Saviour. And now,

A Prayer for the Divine Protection.

I.

O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold, visit and relieve thy servant. Look upon me with the eyes of thy mercy, give me comfort and sure confidence in thee; defend me from the danger of the enemy, and keep me in perpetual peace and safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another for Victory over Sin.

II.

MY transgressions, O Lord, are great and numerous; but thy mercies are incomparably more and greater; they are inconceivably great, and without number: which is a mighty encouragement to such poor guilty creatures as I am, to make our addresses at the throne of thy grace, with hope of being heard by thee. Let it not be in vain that I now implore thy help. As thou hast fill'd my heart with an unfeigned sorrow for my many repeated iniquities, and made me earnestly desirous of pardon and forgiveness, make me, moreover, diligent and industrious, to testify the sincerity of my repentance, by a thorough mortification and amendment. And, that the degrees of my repentance may, in some measure, answer the heinousness of my sins, inspire my soul with such devout affections, such holy desires and inclinations, as that I may run the way of thy commandments with unwearied courage and alacrity, and endeavour, by my future care, to make the best amends I shall be able for my former negligence. It is abundantly too much, that I have hitherto been wanting in that duty thou requirest of me. Grant me, for the time to come, to be always upon my watch, and always intent upon serving thee to the best of my power. Let no temptation befall me, but such as is common to men; and with the temptation also do thou, of thy great goodness, make a way to escape, that I may be able to withstand and conquer it. Work in me both to will and to do, of thy good pleasure. I not only live in the midst of a deceitful world, but have a corrupt heart of my own, apt to start aside in time of trial, and a subtle malicious enemy that lies in wait for my halting; so that I am ruin'd, and must perish irrecoverably, without thy protection. Deny me not such a measure of thy Spirit, as may conduct me safely through all my dangers, and enable me to come off victor in all my conflicts; that

I may go from strength to strength, and never be discouraged, whatsoever encounters thou callest me to. This I beg, through the merits and intercession of thy blessed Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Another for an intire Submission to God's Will.

III.

O Lord, thou art my God, my mighty Saviour and Deliverer; in thee will I put my trust, not doubting of thy goodness to me, in all my fears and dangers. I am brought very low, but thou art able to bear me up; and I will never despair of thy kindness. Watch over me, I beseech thee, for good. Make all my bed in my sickness. Sanctify this thy visitation to me. Teach me to improve it to those good ends and purposes for which it was sent, that, whether by life, or death, I may glorify thy holy name. And grant, that in either I may intirely give up myself to thy disposal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another for a due Preparation for Death.

IV.

O Thou my good and gracious God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed; and without the assistance of whose Holy Spirit, it is not in me to think, speak, or act, as I ought to do; hearken, I beseech thee, to the prayer of thy humble supplicant; suffer no corruption to remain in me, no lust or passion to have dominion over me; but purge me from all my guilt, and enable me to serve thee with a pure heart; that, being cleansed (c) from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, I may perfect holiness in thy fear, and have my accounts in readiness, whensoever thou shalt please to call for them; that so death, whensoever it comes, may be no surprize to me; but I may willingly leave this world, and resign my soul into thy

(c) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

lands, as to a most loving and merciful Father; and when I shall come to appear before thy awful tribunal, at the great tremendous day, I may be set upon the right-hand of our Lord and Judge, and may be sentenced, amongst his true and faithful disciples, to everlasting bliss in thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for the sake, and through the merits, of the same thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Theoph. I beseech Almighty God to hear these your prayers, and the prayers of all your friends for you; and not to take you out of this world till he shall have fitted you for a better.

Anchitb. I thank you for your good wishes and prayers; and do beg of you, and all my friends, to continue your prayers for me. I know not how soon my soul make take its flight into the other world; and I have great need of God's mercy and goodness, without which I must inevitably be in a desperate condition. My sins, my sins, cry aloud against me; my own conscience accuses me; and God, who is greater than my conscience, and knows all my sins; together with their several heinous aggravations, may justly condemn me. Yet I will not despair of his forgiveness. I will hope in his mercy. He has laid help upon one that is mighty to save, the ever-blessed Jesus, whom he gave to be a propitiation for my sins, and not for mine only, but (d) for the sins of the whole world. In him therefore will I trust; through him will I sue for pardon and forgiveness; I will rely on his merits and satisfaction, for the remission of all my sins, and the supply of all defects. And I doubt not, but the good God will hearken to me, when I address myself to him, in the name of such an all-sufficient and most powerful intercessor; in relation to whom he has expressly declared, for our comfort and encouragement, that (e) he is not entered into the holy places made with

(d) 1 John ii. 2.

(e) Heb. ix. 24.

bands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (f) He is exalted with the right-hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins: and (g) is able to save to the uttermost *eis tò πάντεσς*, completely, intirely, as (h) Hefychius, or for ever, as (i) Grotius and Dr. Hammond, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (k) God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to become incarnate, and live, and suffer, and die for us, to the end that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And our Lord himself has given us this promise, that (l) those who come unto him, he will in no wise cast out. This is my comfort and great support, and my main relief against all fears and despondings, that how unworthy soever I be in myself, and though I had ever so evidently, as indeed I have, deserved the eternal indignation of God in the abyss of Hell; yet my Redeemer has made abundant satisfaction for all my sins, and is now at the right-hand of God, pleading his own invaluable merits in my behalf. I will therefore trust in him, in spite of all my own iniquities and sins; and will hope, that, upon my sincere repentance, I shall be reinstated in God's favour, and intitled to a share in the most glorious, most inestimable, most transcendently charming inheritance of the saints in light. I am not conscious of any sin that I now retain any affection for, any lust or passion that I have not unfeignedly renounced, and for which I am not truly humbled; nor any duty, how difficult soever, that I am not resolved to perform, if it please God to allow me time and strength for it. And, if he do not, I promise myself he will graciously accept of such a sorrow, as I have long had for my past miscarriages, and such vows and resolutions of obedience, as I have made, and

(f) Acts v. 31. (g) Heb. vii. 25. (h) In voce πάντεσς.
(i) In loc. (k) John iii. 16. (l) John vi. 37.

have endeavour'd to fulfil according to my power, though with great weakness and imperfection. This is my consolation. And, accordingly,

A Prayer for Growth in Grace.

I Beseech thee, O most merciful Lord God, confirm and increase this hope in me evermore. Give me such a repentance for all my sins, as is not to be repented of; such a steady reliance upon Christ, as will never fail me; such an improvement in all virtue, as may fit me for a better state, against I shall be taken hence. (m) Make me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Help all my weaknesses, and pity my infirmities. Improve any good beginning in me, and (n) work in me both to will and to do, of thy good pleasure. Let no temptations prevail against me. And grant, O Lord, that the more the outward man decayeth, I may be strengthen'd so much the more continually by thy Holy Spirit in the inward man, and may be enabled to proceed from one degree of grace to another, till grace shall at last be consummated in everlasting glory; thro' Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen, Amen.

Theoph. My good friend, you do well, and as becomes a good Christian, thus devoutly to recommend your case to God, and put your trust in him.

Anchitb. Do well in it! It is my necessary duty, and what is indispensibly incumbent upon me, and every one, that would be saved. And so you will be sensible, whenever you come to be in my condition.

Theoph. I acknowledge it, and am desirous to encourage you in it; that *all your appointed time* you may wait, and watch, and beg, and pray, and trust, and hope, *till your change come*; to the end, that then your faith may be turned into vision, and your hope into fruition, and all your watching, and labour, and

(m) Psal. li. 10.

(n) Phil. ii. 13.

patience,

patience, may be rewarded with a crown of glory, that
fadeth not away.

Anchitb. This is what I am aiming at, and endeavouring after. And I beseech Almighty God, that I may not miss of it.

Theoph. God grant your request!

Anchitb. Amen, Amen.

Theoph. As I came hither, I was looking into Dr. Comber's fourth volume upon the Common Prayer, where I met with something to our present purpose; some few directions, I mean, as to the making of our wills; which pleased me well, and I believe it will not be unacceptable to you. And, being not long, if I shall not overtire you, I would read it to you.

Anchitb. My work is now over, and this will not occasion me to speak much; and therefore, if you please, I shall dispose myself to hearken to you.

Theoph. 'Concerning this making of our will,' says the doctor, '(o) these cautions are to be observed: *First*, That it be not deferred till it be too late, lest we be oppressed with sudden death, and leave our executors and posterity involved in endless suits and contentions; the guilt whereof will pursue those into another world, whose wretched carelessness was the dire occasion of all that strife and mischief. And tho' we be not smitten with sudden death, yet we may fall into such a distemper, as shall seize on our senses and understanding; and then we can either make no distribution of our estates, or (p) none that will be valid. Yet if neither of these happen, it is a great disturbance to a languishing man, to reckon, and cast up, to settle and order his affairs; and a mighty impediment to the exercises of religion, wherein those few days we have left, ought

(o) Occasional Offices, p. 301, 302. edit. octav. 1679.

(p) Testamentum, ni perfectum fuerit, nullum est. *Gloss. ad Grat. de Pœn. dist. 3.*

In eo qui testatur, ejus quo testamentum facit, integritas mentis exigitur. *Dig. l. 28. tit. 1. l. 2. Cod. Justin. l. 6. tit. 22.*

‘ to be employed; and it may be observed, none
‘ have so quiet a mind, nor are so intent upon heaven-
‘ ly things, as those who have made their wills in
‘ time of health. It is, therefore, a grievous folly,
‘ and shameful neglect, at best, to defer this; but if
‘ we put it off, because we have no mind to think
‘ so seriously of death, as this will occasion us to do,
‘ the omission then proceeds from atheism and abo-
‘ minable impiety, and declares, that the man desires
‘ his only portion here; and that he is so far from
‘ preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think
‘ of it, *Ecclus* xli. 1. And as this fault is like that
‘ wretched miser’s in the gospel, (who, till the very
‘ moment of his death, persuaded himself he should
‘ live and enjoy all himself) so will his fate, in all
‘ probability, be like his also; even to be snatch’d
‘ away, unready, to a sad eternity, for which he hath
‘ made no provision, *Luke* xii. 19, 20. *Secondly*,
‘ Another part of our duty is, that when we do dis-
‘ pose of our estate, we do it impartially, and by
‘ rules of equity; not disinheriting any of those whom
‘ God hath made our heirs, without necessity force
‘ us thereunto: neither preferring one child before
‘ another, unless some extraordinary acts of duty
‘ require it; nor leaving our wives unprovided for,
‘ when we have consumed, or disposed, of their for-
‘ tunes; neither designing to defraud our creditors of
‘ their just demands. For, if our last act be unjust,
‘ we leave a blot upon our name here; and since we
‘ can never repent of this wickedness, we can expect
‘ nothing but a sad doom in the world whither we
‘ are going. *Lastly*, We must make our will with
‘ a chearful mind, and freely lay down whatever we
‘ have in our hands, when God calls us. We must
‘ praise him, that we had these things while we need-
‘ ed them; and, now that we have no longer use for
‘ them, let us leave them (without repining) to those
‘ that come after us. We must not look back to
‘ *Egypt*, now we are upon our march to *Canaan*;

nor is there any thing in these worldly goods to deserve it: they were vanity and vexation while we had them, and now we can have them no more; but if we part with them freely, we shall have a better inheritance by far in exchange for them.'

Anchith. This is very good advice; and what I wish every one, that has any thing to dispose of, would be sure to put in practice. As I hope I have now done.

Theoph. Blessed be God, that you have liv'd to do it!—But I must not forget, that it is high time for me to withdraw. I thank God, that you have been able to hold out so well under this day's long work. Now I shall leave you, that you may try to recover your spirits, which must needs be much spent by so long an exercise of them. Wherefore I heartily bid you good night; and I pray God you may find yourself refreshed to-morrow, and that I may find you in a hopeful way of recovery on *Thursday*, when I hope to see you again, with your other friends, that have appointed then to visit you.

Anchith. Dear *Theophilus*, I am exceedingly obliged to you for all your kindnesses, and particularly for the long trouble I have given you to-day. And I shall be still farther in your debt, for any time you will please to spend with me, whilst I am on this side of the grave. For, you see, I am in a weak condition, and need the comfort and assistance of all my friends; and I hope shall be the better for it to all eternity.

Theoph. I wish I were capable of being more truly serviceable to you than I am. But, assure yourself, my best endeavours shall not be wanting. At present I take my leave of you, but shall not fail to pray for you when I am gone.

Anchith. I beseech you not to omit that christian office for me, for I have great need of the hearty prayers of all good people.

The End of the Third VISIT.

The

The Fourth VISIT.

How a Man may judge of his Interest in God's Favour, either here, or hereafter.

Euseb. **P**RAY how is *Anchitbanes* to-day?

Servant. Much as when you saw him last.

Euseb. Is any company with him?

Serv. Only *Theodorus*, who has just been at prayer with him. Will you not please to walk in, Sir?

Euseb. I am glad to hear, *Anchitbanes*, that you are not worse than when I saw you last; and to find so worthy a person as *Theodorus* with you. And I wish I had come a little sooner, that I might have joined with him in praying for you. However, with *Theodorus's* leave I would put you upon intreating a favour of him, before he leaves you, that may be of advantage to me as well as you.

Anchitb. Pray what is that?

Theod. I am sure I shall be very ready, to do any service in my power to either of you.

Euseb. You were always very kind, which makes me take this freedom, in hope you will not be displeased at it.

Anchitb. Pray what is it you would have me intreat of *Theodorus*?

Euseb. When *Theophilus*, and the rest of us, were here some days since, you desired our resolution of a doubt, much fitter for *Theodorus's* opinion than ours; and which I heartily wish to hear resolved by him.

Anchitb. I very well remember it; and if this occasion will permit, I will trespass so far upon his goodness as to beg his information concerning it, it being a matter of great importance to all; but more especially to those in my present circumstances.

Theod. Be pleased to propose your question; and I will give you the best satisfaction I can concerning it.

Anchith. It is this: *How I may make a right judgment of my interest in God's favour, either at present, or in relation to a future state.*

Theod. A weighty question indeed; and which I should be glad to have oftener proposed to me by those in your condition. But it is the miserable unhappiness and folly of the generality of mankind, that they are not so sensible, either of their duty, or their interest, as you appear to be.

Anchith. I am sure it highly concerns me to be so. And I beg therefore, that you will add to all your other kindnesses, this which *Eusebius* has put me upon asking of you; as I had before asked it of himself, and some other good friends, that promised to come and see me.

Theod. Your question consists of two different parts; the one relating to this present, and the other to a future life. And I suppose you desire I should speak to both of them.

Anchith. If it will not be too great a trouble to you: as I hope it will not, after the experience I have had, of the delight you take in doing good.

Theod. Assure yourself, *Anchithanes*, any service I can do you, will be no trouble to me. But this ought by no means to be so, because it is only a part of my ministerial office, and what I am obliged to do for any of my parishioners, that shall desire it of me. I begin with the former part of your inquiry.

Anchith. If you please.

Theod. Then I must tell you, you are not to imagine, that God is at enmity with you, because he thinks fit, for what wise reasons you know not, to lay his hand thus heavy upon you. It is rather a sign of his affection to you, or any of us, and his paternal care over us, that he condescends to correct us in this world, to the end we may repent, may acknowledge our faults, and amend our lives, and sue for mercy and forgiveness, and *grace to help in time of need*; that so, by means of our temporal afflictions and calamities,

lamities, we may *die to the sins* for which we are thus punished, and *rise again to newness of life*; and so may escape the everlasting plagues of the other world, and may never come into (a) *the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*, but may have (b) *an entrance ministred unto us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. We have the authority of St. Paul for it, that when we are punished in like manner as the *Corinthians* were, for their gross abuse of the Lord's Supper, of whom he professes, that divers were seized with sickness, and others with death; when we are thus punished, God does it, not out of an irreconcilable displeasure, and for our destruction; but in way of kindness, and in order to our eternal salvation. For (c) *when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*. When God suffers the sinner to flourish in his wickedness, saying, concerning him, as he did of *Ephraim*, after he was *joined with idols*, *Let him alone*; when he gives him up to follow his own heart's ways, and to *add iniquity to iniquity*, till *the measure of his sins be filled up*; it is a terrible evidence, that such an one is reserved for the pains of the world to come, and that *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, will be his everlasting portion. Our blessed Saviour denounces a miserable end to such as abounded in the good things of this world, but took not care to do good with them, or to serve and please God, the giver of them, and so to prepare themselves for a better state: (d) *Woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full; for ye shall mourn and weep*. And, no doubt, a wretched portion must await all such in the other life, as are suffered to proceed licentiously, and without controul in their sins, in this.

Anchith. How comes it then to pass, that this truth is so little taken notice of? the generality of men

(a) Rev. xxi. 8.

(b) 2 Pet. i. 11.

(c) 1 Cor. xi. 32.

(d) Luke vi. 24, 25.

esteem those most beloved of God, who live in all kind of wealth and pleasure, and never taste of any observable adversity in all their days.

Theod. True; but the Scripture gives us another notion of them, assuring us, (e) *There is no peace, no real and lasting peace, to the wicked*, how prosperous soever their outward estate may be. See what a character the Psalmist gives of them, and of their tottering changeable condition: (f) *I was grieved*, says he, *at the wicked: I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity. For they are in no peril of death; but are lusty and strong. They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men. And this is the cause they are so bolden with pride, and overwhelm'd with cruelty. Their eyes swell with fatness, and they do even what they lust.* (g) *Then thought I to understand this; but it was too hard for me: until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I the end of these men: namely, how thou dost set them in slippery places, and castest them down, and destroyest them. Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!* And, at another time, (h) *I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay tree. I went by; and, lo, he was gone: I sought him, but his place could no where be found. Keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace at the last. As for the transgressors, they shall perish together. And the end of the ungodly is, that they shall be rooted out at the last.*

Euseb. The Holy Scripture, and especially that most seraphick part of it the book of *Psalms*, abounds with places to this purpose.

Theod. You say true. But that I may not be tedious, I will add only two passages more at present. And they are both from the apostle *St. James*, in his catholick epistle: who, speaking of the rich man,

(e) Isa. lvii. 21.

(f) Psal. lxxiii. 3, &c.

(g) Psal. lxxiii.

15, 16, 17, 18.

(h) Psal. xxxvii. 35, 36, 37, 38.

affirms, that (i) *as the flower of the grass he passeth away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.* And again, to the same effect, (k) *Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabbaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter. As much as to say, You have pampered and glutted yourselves, as it were, for the shambles. Whereby it is plainly intimated to us, that the end of such as have lived in the greatest plenty and ease, is oftentimes very miserable. And, by consequence, all their temporal advantages, above others, are very far from proving them the favourites of Heaven. This is what, under God, depends upon the disposition of their own minds, and the care they take to obey and serve God; without which, how great soever they be in this world, they know assuredly beforehand, that (l) *they shall never see the Lord in that which is to come.**

Euseb. So true is that in the author of the book of Wisdom: (m) *The hope of the ungodly is like dust, that is blown away with the wind; like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm; like as the smoke that is dispersed here-and-there with a tempest; and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day. But the righteous live for evermore; their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most*

(i) James i. 10, 11. (k) Chap. v. 1, &c. (l) Heb. xii. 14.
(n) Wisd. v. 14, 15, 16.

Higb. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown, from the Lord's hand; for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm he shall protect them.

Theoph. So that it is easy to observe how deplorable the condition often is, of such as the world are wont to magnify and applaud, to reverence and almost adore them; or else to malign or envy them for their greatness; who yet, if rightly consider'd, would more deservedly be the objects of a sincere and hearty compassion, notwithstanding all their outward splendor: whilst, on the other hand, such as these haughty worldlings seem most to despise, are many times in an infinitely more desirable condition than themselves. *Hearken, my beloved brethren, says St. James: Hath (n) not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?* And the same apostle pronounces a blessing to him that undergoes afflictions, for the trial and exercise of his christian virtues, and perhaps suffers the loss of all he had, for his faithful adherence to his duty; that he shall have the approbation of God, and, as a consequent thereof, shall be made everlastingly happy in the other state. *(o) Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.* And there is great reason why such sufferings should be expected to have this happy event, amongst others, upon this account, that whilst people swim in ease and pleasure, and have all things to their hearts desire, whilst, as it is said to have fared with *(p) Q. Metellus*, their whole life is but one continued series of prosperity, without any misfortunes, disappointments, or losses; they are apt to be enamoured of their temporal enjoyments, and to often aim at no greater happiness, undervaluing and neglecting the other most lasting state, which they ought much rather to be incessantly labouring after. Had the *Israelites* been

(n) James ii. 5. (o) James i. 22. (p) Valer. Maxim. l. 7. c. 1.

patronized and encouraged in *Egypt*, and allowed a free and quiet enjoyment of the good things thereof; there is little reason to doubt, but they would have been for taking up their rest there without ever desiring to return to the promised *Canaan*. It was only their hard bondage, and the cruel usage they met with from their unmerciful task-masters, that would make them long for a removal into another country. In like manner, when the Christian has his *lot fall to him in a fair ground*, and he is possessed of a *goodly heritage*, when his circumstances suit his desires, and he has few or no crosses to complain of; this is a powerful temptation to him, to grow regardless of another life, for which he has no mind to exchange this. And there are but few that will be at the pains of providing for their departure hence, without some afflictions to awaken their lethargick minds, and put them upon (q) *desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly*, such a country, whose happiness shall not equal only, but exceed, their utmost desires and imaginations; (r) where *they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; but the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*. This world's delights are of an insinuating nature, and debase the soul, and clog it in its ascent towards Heaven, and make men willing to pitch their tents here, without troubling themselves for what may happen beyond the grave. Hence it is, we see all mankind, a very few excepted, so (s) *cumber'd*, with *Martha*, about many things of less moment, as in the mean time to neglect *the one thing needful, that good part, which shall not be taken away* from any of those that once attain to it. The uneasiness of our present station may perhaps incline us to seek after another, which we hope may be more commodious and beneficial, and so may become a means of inviting us to have *our con-*

(q) Heb. xi. 16. (r) Rev. vii. 16, 17. (s) Luke x. 41, 42.

versation in Heaven, and may bring us to *look past the things which are seen*, to those *which are not seen*, which are eternal, and so will never fail us. But, till we meet with some such remembrancer to put us in mind of our duty, how sadly do we ordinarily immerse ourselves in the cares of the world, and delight ourselves in the acquisition of this life's transitory advantages; as if we had never been born for another, nor were ever call'd upon, and intreated, and encouraged to seek after it!

Euseb. This being the happy effect of afflictions in general, it is easy to apply the consideration thereof to the case of our friend here in bed.

Theod. It is so: for, if all afflictions and sufferings have a natural tendency to fit us for the heavenly felicity, sickness in particular, or corporal infirmities, may well be looked upon as peculiarly conducing hereto; because these not only serve to convince us of the insufficiency and uncertainty of all worldly attainments, and how little they are to be depended upon; but moreover are particularly adapted to remind us of our mortality, and that great change which is every day approaching nearer and nearer to each one of us. For, if we cannot promise ourselves any certainty of continuing in this life, for a day's, or but an hour's space, though in our perfectest health and strength, much less may any presume to do it, when their spirits are exhausted, their flesh and strength wasted, and their breath grown short and painful, and it is a great question whether ever they shall be well again. This will naturally carry our meditations forward to another life, and ought certainly to draw off our minds, our thoughts and desires, from this world, out of which we know not how quickly we may be taken; and to make us solicitous for *a better and an enduring substance* in the other, wherein we are undoubtedly to be fixed to all eternity. And is it not a singular instance of mercy and compassion in Almighty God, thus to warn us of our frailty, the timely consideration whereof may be of such vast advantage to us for

evermore? Who would ever blame so tender a benefactor, for taking too much care of him, or being too forward to fit and prepare him for the kingdom of Heaven? These visitations, though uneasy to such as feel the smart of them, may, and, if rightly improved, will, be of everlasting benefit to them. And, if this be an unkindness, we may complain of God as unkind, whensoever he is pleased to confine us to our bed. But, on the other hand, if sickness be only a salutary medicine, for rectifying the evils and distempers of the soul, and qualifying the patient for the most inestimable kindness he is capable of receiving, he must be highly to blame, that can suffer himself to murmur at Almighty God, for such a gracious method of procedure with him.

Euseb. Happy therefore is the man, that is not only thus visited by God, but knows also how to make a right use of what is laid upon him, so as that after his departure hence he may attain to that unspeakable, unconceivable joy, which *no man can take from him.*

Theod. Happy indeed! thrice happy is he, and highly blessed of God, that so carries himself upon his sick-bed, as that he may be fit either for life or death; to live to God's glory, if restored to health; or to enter upon a heavenly inheritance, if he shall be translated hence.

Anchith. Oh! that I may be found in this number; that, poor guilty sinner as I am, I may bear my sickness as I ought, and may be fitted by it for a better state!

A Prayer for a right Christian Deportment in time of Sickness.

O Blessed and glorious Lord God, who delightest not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live; and who dost not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; look graciously upon me, thine unworthy servant, lying here in great weakness of body. Speak peace to my soul, and assure me, that thou art
re-

reconciled to me, and wilt forgive me all mine offences. Teach me also to behave myself under thy chastisement as becomes the state whereto thou hast reduced me. Wean my heart from the world, and all those transitory enjoyments in it, which are of so little advantage to me now, and which I must be sure to leave behind me, whensoever I shall be taken hence: fit me for whatever thou designest for me, whether in this, or in another world. And whether it be to live, or to die, let my heart be intirely resigned to thy most wise determination concerning me. Renew in me, most loving Father, whatsoever is decay'd by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by my own carnal will and frailness. Continue me in the unity of the church, and the true faith of the gospel; that I neither fall into schism, nor heresy, nor sin of any kind. Consider my contrition; accept my tears; and assuage my pain, as shall seem to thee most expedient for me. Enable me, in all cases, stedfastly to rely upon thy promises, and never to distrust thy care of those that put their trust in thee. Hear me for myself, and bear all those that pray for me. Watch over me continually for good: and never leave me, nor forsake me, till thou shalt have fitted me for, and brought me to, thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Theod. God, infinitely good and gracious, grant your heart's desire! But, as to what I was saying concerning the happiness of those who carry themselves aright upon their sick-bed, give me leave, *Anchithanes*, to recommend, to your serious consideration and practice, Bishop Taylor's advice in his *Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying*: (t) 'Be confident, that, although God
' often sends pardon without correction, yet he never
' sends correction without pardon, unless it be thy
' fault: and therefore take every or any affliction,
' as an earnest-penny of thy pardon: and, upon condition there may be pardon with God, let any thing
' be welcome, that he can send as its instrument, or

(t) Chap. 5. Sect. 5. N. 6.

‘ condition. Suffer God to chuse his own circumstances
 ‘ of adopting thee, and be content to be under disci-
 ‘ pline, when the reward of that is to become the son
 ‘ of God. (u) We may reckon sickness amongst
 ‘ good things, as we reckon rhubarb, and aloes, and
 ‘ child-birth, and labour, and obedience, and disci-
 ‘ pline. These are unpleasant, and yet safe; they
 ‘ are troubles in order to blessings; or they are secu-
 ‘ rities from danger, or the hard choices of a less and
 ‘ more tolerable evil.’

Anchith. I am not without some hope, that tho’ Almighty God justly punishes me for my sin, yet he will not totally take away his mercy from me, especially considering what my good friends have already discoursed upon this subject.

Theod. Take courage, good *Anchithanes*; and do not suffer yourself to be overwhelmed with needless fears and jealousies. Assure yourself, that how many, and how great, soever your sins be, the mercies of God are more and greater. He is a God of infinite commiseration, and (x) *mighty to save*, (y) *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*. And though he will not clear the guilty, yet he is ready to (z) *show mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*. His (a) *loving-kindness has been ever of old*. Yet has his pity and compassion, and his willingness to be reconcil’d to fallen man, been incomparably more gloriously displayed by the gospel of our blessed Saviour, who has (b) *consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*, assumed at his incarnation, and at length offer’d upon the cross for us; and has over and over promis’d free pardon and forgiveness, to such as with an humble and truly penitent heart, sue for it through his mediation. (c) *He is a Prince, and a Saviour, exalted by God’s right-hand, and impower’d to give repentance, and remission of*

(u) Sect. 6. N. 3. (x) Isa. lxiii. 1. (y) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
 (z) Ibid. xx. 6. (a) Psal. xxv. 5. (b) Heb. x. 20. (c) Acts v. 31.

sins. And (d) *those that come to him*, as they ought, *he will in no wise cast out.* This is reviving news to a disconsolate soul; an enlivening medicine for a dejected mind. And you ought to support yourself with the thoughts of such inestimable condescension, and not to doubt, but upon your true faith, and sincere repentance, you will receive the benefit of all our Lord has thus graciously done and suffered for you.

Anchith. God grant I may! I am unfeignedly sorry for all my transgressions, and desirous to amend, and walk more holily for the future, if it shall please God to allow me a farther time of trial. And I do beg of God, through *Jesus Christ* my Redeemer, to look in mercy upon me, a poor helpless, guilty, wretched sinner, that have vilely offended him, and given him just occasion to cut me off, and *swear in his wrath, that I shall never enter into his rest.* I am fully satisfied of the efficacy of our Saviour's sufferings, and the atonement thereby made for all mankind; but still my fear is, that I am not so qualified, as to have just grounds to conclude, that the promises of the gospel belong to me.

Euseb. Take care, I beseech you, that you do not wrong yourself, by a causeless distrust of that abundant goodness, that has made you. Remember it is most certain, that where-ever repentance and faith are, there are likewise God's mercy, favour, and loving-kindness; and, as an undoubted consequent thereof, the pardon of sin, and a title to salvation. (e) *Because he considereth, says the prophet Ezekiel, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* And again, (f) *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.* And to the same purpose, says St. Peter, (g) *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* And, (h) *He that believeth on*

(d) John vi. 37. (e) Ezek. xviii. 28. (f) Ver. 30. (g) Acts iii. 19. (h) John xi. 25, 26.

me, faith our Saviour, *though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.* And, at another time, (i) *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that whosoever believeth in him, that is, so as to obey his commands, as well as to hope for salvation by his means, as is abundantly evident from the whole intent and design of the gospel, as well as from numerous particular texts in it: that whosoever thus believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.*

Anchitb. These are very comfortable sayings: God give me grace never to forget them!

Theod. There is another highly encouraging passage in the Gospel, which I would intreat you not to forget.

Anchitb. Pray what is it? I will take care to remember it.

Theod. I mean what St. *Luke* relates of the prodigal son, to whose sins I persuade myself you will not pretend to equal your's; and yet he found mercy upon his return; and to that degree, that our Saviour tells us, upon this occasion, not only, that (k) *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over a sinner that repenteth, but even, (l) that there shall be more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance.* So kind, so ready is our good and gracious God to receive a returning sinner into his favour, that he seems almost to be better pleased with such an one's recovery, than if he had never gone astray.

Euseb. That parable of the returning prodigal is of singular importance. It is, in (m) *Grotius's* judgment, *the most famous of all our Saviour's parables; the most affectionate, and set forth in the liveliest colours.*

(i) John iii. 16, 17.

(k) Luke xv. 10.

(l) Ver. 7.

(m) *Inter omnes Christi parabolas eximia, plena affectuum, & pulcherrimis picta coloribus. Grot. in ver. 20.*

Theod. And not without reason. For in it we have describ'd to us, the evil and mischief of a vicious course of life, the admirable efficacy and advantage of repentance, the immense benignity and compassion of Almighty God to relenting, returning sinners, and the astonishing kindness and affection wherewith he receives them upon their return. See here an unbridled youth, in the midst of his juvenile heat and activity, casting off the yoke, that he might the more securely, and with the less fear or interruption, pursue his licentious sinful inclinations, *going into a far country*, to be at a distance from his aged father, so as neither to be under his eye, nor be disturb'd by such wholesome advice as he had resolv'd before-hand not to attend to, or be influenced by. See him taking his fill of sensual pleasures, studying all the most extravagant gratifications of an unbridled lust, spending his estate *(n) in riotous living*, and *with harlots*, without any thought of returning to himself, or to his native country, and his father's house, till mere necessity, and the dreadful misery he had thus senselessly brought upon himself, forced him to it. See him who had thus thoughtlessly wasted his portion in all manner of excess, expos'd in a while (as it ordinarily happens to the intemperate and debauched) to the extremity of want and penury, thrust out of his costly lodgings, divested of his glittering attire, at the utmost loss for mere necessities for his subsistence, constrained to earn his bread in the sweat of his brows, and in the most servile and abject manner, by *(o) feeding the swine*, and even brought so low, as to desire that he might partake of the same food with them; *and no man gave unto him*. See him again wrought upon by these dismal effects of his folly, and desirous to humble himself to his offended father, in the most submissive manner, that, if possible, he might obtain admittance into his family, though it were but in quality of one of his under-servants, rather than perish with hunger in a foreign

(n) Luke xv. 13. and 30.

(o) Ver. 15, 16.

nation. For thus he began to reason with himself: How is it, that I, who have indeed deserv'd my father's utmost indignation, that he should no longer own me for his son, seeing I have so shamefully abus'd his kindness and bounty to me, yet know his goodness to be such, that I cannot doubt but he will take some notice of me, and receive me, I hope, into his house again, though it were but in the place of one of the meanest of his attendants; where at least I may be supplied with those necessaries my nature calls for, and not linger out my time, as I do here, pinch'd with hunger, and choak'd with thirst; how is it, that I thus senselessly continue to prolong my misery, without seeking that redress, which I can hardly fail of upon my repentance? Why do I delay to implore so kind a father's pardon, that I may not remain destitute of those conveniencies, and that provision of food, which all that belong to him are furnished with? I will no longer thus obstinately punish myself, but will try the tender bowels of a compassionate parent, in hope he will not reject me when I do so. (p) *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.* And now behold the wonderful compassion of Almighty God to penitent sinners, lively represented in the father's joyful reception of this former reprobate. His displeasure against so undutiful a son is immediately laid aside, upon the first appearance of amendment. His bowels presently yearn towards him, and in a manner prevent the prodigal's humiliation, and confession of his past wickedness. He could not suffer himself to stay for the other's coming to him; but as soon as ever he discovered him at a distance, ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, his heart was moved within him, and he was dissolved into love and pity, and hastened above the usual pace of a father,

(p) Luke xv. 17, 18, 19.

especially

especially when going to meet a child, and more especially again, such an undutiful, graceless, unworthy child, as this had been. He had not patience to stay for his son's approach, much less could he find in his heart to withdraw himself, as one that was angry. His resentment was all buried in a speedy oblivion; and nothing now appeared, but the fondest caresses of one who had so little deserved them, and against whom he had been so justly, so lately, and so highly incensed. All on a sudden, nothing was to be seen but joy and gladness, and the heartiest endearments, together with all other tokens of mirth, for the recovery of a lost child. (q) *When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.* A comfortable resemblance of the infinite mercy of our Heavenly Father, and his ineffable commiseration for the greatest of sinners, and the certainty they may promise themselves of a favourable acceptance with him, so they do but renounce their sinful courses, and walk as becomes the holy profession they have taken upon them. Let them but (r) *repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*; and they need not fear, that he will shew himself irreconcilable to them. On the contrary, they may encourage themselves with a well-grounded expectation of a gracious reception, and of great joy and rejoicing in Heaven at their conversion. Whenever they *come to themselves*, and are disposed to return to their provoked Father, acknowledging their offences, and repenting of all their riot and excess, and all the wickedness they had fallen into, they will find him more ready to forgive, than they are to sue to him for forgiveness. When the prodigal did

(q) Luke xv. 20, 22, 23.

(r) Acts xxvi. 20.

but

but make some advance towards his father, whilst he was yet at a distance, the father, impatient of delay, runs to him, embraces and kisses him, with the utmost affection, and entertains him with joy; and that no ordinary and common joy, but even more than if after the example of his elder brother, he had all along continued with, and been dutiful to him.

Anchith. Oh the great, the exceeding great, and infinite goodness of Almighty God!

Theod. Here you see that verified, which was spoken in the Old Testament, by the mouth of the prophet *Jeremiah*, (t) *Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed, and has scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And, a little after, (u) Return, ye backsliding children; and I will heal your backslidings. As he also saith, by another prophet, (x) As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness. And again, (y) Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him*

(t) *Jer. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.* (u) *Ver. 22.* (x) *Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 12.* (y) *Chap. xviii. 31, 32.*

that diet, saith the Lord God: Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Anchith. True; but these words were spoken to the Jews; and how shall I be sure they relate to us as well as to them?

Theod. Besides what I have said concerning the parable now insisted upon, (which was spoken by our Saviour to his disciples, and so plainly testifies the great love of God to penitent sinners amongst us Christians) you will easily answer this doubt yourself, if you but attend awhile to what the apostles have spoken in relation to it. Of a truth, says St. Peter, (z) *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* Agreeably whereto St. Paul argues, (a) *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.* And in another place, (b) *There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.* And again, saith the apostle, (c) *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.* And yet more fully, (d) *Remember, that ye being, in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made with bands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition*

(z) Acts x. 34, 35. (a) Rom. iii. 29, 30. (b) Chap. x. 12, 13.
(c) Rom. xv. 4. (d) Ephes. ii. 11, &c.

between us; having abolished in the flesh his enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you are also builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Anchith. For ever blessed be the Lord our God; who hath made us Gentiles partakers of his heavenly blessings through Christ!

Euseb. There is no cause of despair for any penitent, how heinous soever his sins have been. (e) For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And a man's having been a Heathen, or a Publican, or a sinner, in his former life, doth not incapacitate him for receiving benefit by our Lord; but, contrariwise, gives him a fair title to it, upon his repentance. For this was the end of Christ's coming into the world, namely, to reduce sinners to repentance, and obtain mercy for them. (f) He is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, both the guilt and the punishment of them; 'Who was slain,' says a learned commentator, (g) as a peculiar victim, 'to redeem us to God by his blood, to procure us the remission of sins, and to exempt all that believe in him from the sentence of death, which came upon the world for the sin of Adam.' I add, and for all those numerous actual transgressions, whereof every one of us is guilty before him. So that now,

(e) Luke xix. 10. (f) John i. 29. (g) Dr. Whitby in loc.

if

(b) if any man fall into whatsoever sort of sin, we have a powerful Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Holy and Just one, in whom alone was no sin; and he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

Anchith. Therefore I will trust in God, thro' Christ my Redeemer and Intercessor. And whether he punishes me for the trial of my faith, or for my sins, that, by this means, he may reclaim me from them; or for whatsoever other cause; I will take the boldness to call upon him, with hope of mercy from him.

Theod. Undoubtedly you may, and ought to do it. He has both commanded it, and promis'd to hear you when you do it.

Anchith. Where is that commandment, or that promise to be found in Scripture.

Theod. In divers places, both of the Old and New Testament. But, to avoid prolixity, I shall give you only an instance out of each. As to the former, (i) *Call upon me in the time of trouble*, says God by the Psalmist; *so I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me*; or, as it is in the other translation, *I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*. Here God not only requires us to seek to him in time of affliction, but promises a gracious answer to the prayers thus put up to him. And as to the other, it is the apostle St. Paul's direction, (k) *whatever your grievances be, to be careful, anxiously solicitous, for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let your requests be made known unto God*. And then it follows, *The peace, the love and favour, of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus*; you shall be preserved firm and steadfast in him and his doctrine; and shall be enabled to bear with patience and contentedness of mind, whatsoever shall be laid upon you. Fear not, therefore, in this your sickness, diligently, and without ceasing, to fly to God for succour and ease; nothing

(b) 1 John ii. 1, 2. (i) Psalm l. 15. (k) Phil. iv. 6, 7.

doubting, but he will favourably hear you, and will grant your request, so far as shall be expedient for you. (k) *His eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.* (l) *He is the God that beareth prayers; and to him shall all flesh come.* (m) *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all such as call upon him faithfully. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will help them.* And, This, therefore, says St. John, (n) *is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he beareth us. And if we know, that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions, that we desired of him.*

Euseb. And to this remedy the faithful servants of God have always betaken themselves in their afflictions, and have found the good effect of their prayers.

Theod. They have so, as appears from multitudes of instances in Scripture. Good king *Hezekiah* being affrighted at the appearance of *Sennacherib's* numerous army, and the receipt of *Rabshekar's* proud and blasphemously domineering letter, (o) *went up to the house of the Lord, and spread the letter before the Lord, and prayed unto the Lord, to vindicate his cause.* (p) And the event of his address was, that the Prophet *Isaiah* was sent, to promise him safety and deliverance. And accordingly, (q) *The angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose in the morning, they were all dead corpses.* (r) And at another time, being directed to set his house in order, to dispose of his temporal concerns, because the time was come, that he must die and not live; that is to say, his disease was mortal, and he could not hope to

(k) Psalm xxxiv. 15. (l) Ibid. lxxv. 2. (m) Ibid. cxlv. 17, 18, 19. (n) 1 John v. 14, 15. (o) Isa. xxxvii. 14. (p) Ibid. ver. 21, &c. (q) Ibid. ver. 36. (r) 2 Kings xx. 1, 2, 3.

recover by any natural means; he hereupon turned his face to the wall, and prayed, and wept sore. (s) And the Lord heard his prayer, and beheld his tears, and sent the prophet back to him with a promise of deliverance, and an assurance, that on the third day he should go up to the house of the Lord. And the Lord added to his days fifteen years. (t) Daniel, in like manner, who at other times made his supplications no less than three times a day, we may be sure would not neglect to do it, when in the lion's den; (u) nor Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when in the fiery furnace. And lo the astonishing return they met with! (x) God sent his angel, and shut the lions mouths, that they should not hurt the one; and so damp'd the violence of the fire, (y) that it had no power over the others; nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. (z) So Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and by this means obtain'd deliverance; (a) for the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. And as David cried unto the Lord in all his troubles, and was deliver'd; so did his own, and his people's ancestors before him, from age to age, and obtain'd the like relief, as himself testifies; (b) Our fathers hoped in thee, they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them; they called upon thee, and were holpen; they put their trust in thee, and were not confounded. (c) When St. Paul and Silas were cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, they failed not to apply themselves to God for redress, by night, as well as by day. (d) For behold, at midnight, they prayed, and sung praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And then it follows, (e) And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors

(s) 2 Kings xx. 5, 6. (t) Dan. vi. 10. (u) Ibid. iii. 26.
 (x) Ibid. vi. 22. (y) Ibid. iii. 27. (z) Jonah ii. 1, &c. (a) Ibid.
 ver. 10. (b) Psalm xxii. 4, 5. (c) Acts xvi. 23, 24. (d) Ibid.
 ver. 25. (e) Ibid. ver. 26.

were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. Thus when (f) St. Peter was kept in prison at Jerusalem, prayer was made unto God, without ceasing, for him. And tho' one would have thought him, whilst within those walls, to have been sufficiently secur'd from making his escape; yet it came to pass, that whilst (g) he was sleeping betwixt two soldiers, bound with two chains, within; and, on the outside, the keepers before the door kept the prison; (h) yet this hinder'd not, but that the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, *Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.* (i) And when they were past the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate which leadeth into the city, which opened to them of its own accord, and let them out. And Justin Martyr tells us of the Thundering legion, which, as it consisted of Christians, so was a miraculous deliverance wrought at their supplication, in a time of great necessity. (k) For when Marcus Antoninus, and his army, whereof these were a part, were like to perish by hunger and thirst, but especially by the latter of them, not having had a supply of water for five days together; no sooner did these Christians prostrate themselves upon the ground, calling upon God for their relief, in their distressed condition, but εὐθέως ὕδωρ ἠκολούθει οὐρανόθεν, immediately the rain came pouring down from Heaven, cooling, and refreshing their own army; but a storm of lightning and hail upon their enemies. St. Cyprian professed the prayers of the Christians to be their (l) spiritual weapons, and the divine darts that protected them. As Origen (m) also declares the prayers of such as are replenished with the Holy Spirit to be heard by God; and that hereupon he utters his voice from Heaven, and sends such blessed showers, as refresh the soul. And

(f) Acts xii. 5. (g) Ibid. ver. 6. (h) Ibid. ver. 7. (i) Ibid. ver. 10. (k) Justin Mart. Apol. 2. (l) Epist. 60. (m) Περὶ εὐχαρίσ.

Constantine the Great affirms (n) a righteous prayer to be an invincible defence; that it shall not meet with a disappointment, when offered up in holiness. But it is needless to insist upon the authority of others, since the Holy Scripture is so full to this purpose; and especially considering the express promise of our blessed Saviour: (o) Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And again, (p) Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you. Here is a sure foundation to build upon. Others may publish their own experience of the efficacy of their prayers; but our Lord here gives us such assurances, as leave no room to doubt, whether our prayers shall be granted, supposing them such as were fit to be made by us; and that we ourselves put no obstruction in the way.

A Prayer for Direction and Assistance to pray aright.

I.

SEeing I am weak and helpless, and at my best estate I have found, O God, by sad experience, that without thee I am not able to please thee, nor know of myself, without the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, how to pray for any thing as I ought; I therefore humbly beg thy guidance and direction, that all my petitions may be according to thy will; that when I confess my sins, it may be with an intire abhorrence and detestation of them; when I offer up my praises, I may do it from a truly thankful heart; when I ask any temporal blessings, any deliverance from danger or misery, any good thing to be bestowed upon me, whether health of body, and

(n) Ἀνίκητον γὰρ χρεῖμα ἡ δικαία προσευχή, καὶ εἰς ὅσως λιλανεύων ἀπολυγχανε τῷ σκοπῷ. Orat. ad Cœtum Sanctorum, c. 26.

(o) Matth. vii. 7, 8. (p) John xvi. 23.

a competency of outward enjoyments; an inward peace and satisfaction of mind; or whatsoever is most desirable here, I may be sure to do it alway with a perfect submission to thine infinite wisdom; and when I sue for spiritual favours, the forgiveness of sin, thy Holy Spirit to enlighten my understanding, to raise my affections to thee, and heavenly things; to assist my weaknesses, and help my infirmities, and enable me for the performance of whatever thou requirest of me, or for eternal life and salvation; I may do it in faith and humility, and may watchfully avoid whatever tends to the frustrating my desires. Cleanse and purify my soul from all those idle and vain fancies, those inordinate inclinations to the things of this world, those carnal desires and imaginations, and all those irregular motions in any kind, which are too apt to misemploy my thoughts, and cool my affections; and even when in thy immediate presence, and suing for the greatest blessings I am capable of receiving. And since I cannot serve thee as I would, do thou make me to serve thee in such a manner, as thou wilt condescend to approve of, through Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

Another for the good Success of our Prayers.

II.

AND as thou hast both commanded and encouraged me to address myself to thee, for a supply of whatever I stand in need of, whether in relation to this, or to another life; hearken to me, O gracious Lord, whenever a sense of my duty, and of my wants, brings me to make my supplications before thee. Extend thy pity and compassion to me. And answer not my requests according to my own deservings, but according to my needs, and thine abundant mercies, in thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Euseb. I presume, Theodorus, that you have seen a Book, written about fourscore years since, by a very worthy author, though not commonly taken notice of

of now. He was sometime fellow of *Emanuel College*, in *Cambridge*; and afterwards rector of *Instow*, in *Devonshire*. And his name was Mr. *John Down*.

Theod. He had several treatises published in a pretty thick *quarto*; but, I think, not till after his death. And he was, I find by them, a very considerable man. But how came you to mention him now?

Euseb. Upon the account of an admirable passage I have observ'd in him, to the point you was discoursing upon; which is so full to the purpose, that I got it by heart some years ago, and have since so often thought of it, and been pleas'd with it, that I am apt to think I shall never forget it.

Theod. It does not occur to me at present. Be so kind, therefore, as to help me out.

Euseb. It is at the fifty-fifth page of this book; and begins thus: 'Prayer, as *Damasce*n expresseth it, is ἀνάστασις τῆ ψυχῆ, the mounting or flying up of the soul unto the throne of grace. It is the sweet incense, that sweet-smelling sacrifice, that savoureth so pleasingly in the nostrils of our God. The opportunity whereof, of *Jacobs* makes us *Israels*, wrestlers, prevailers with God; that if we will, he cannot go from us, until he hath granted us his blessing. For it hath annexed unto it the gracious promise of impetration. — Neither is there any thing so difficult, or impossible with man, but by prayer it may be obtain'd. By prayer, *Abraham*, when he was far stricken in years, and the womb of his wife *Sarah* was now dead, obtained of God a son, even *Isaac*. By prayer, *Jacob* escaped the fury and danger of his brother *Esau*. By prayer, the children of *Israel* were delivered from their cruel servitude and bondage in *Egypt*. By prayer, *Moses* stood in the gap, and pacified the wrath of God, that he destroyed not his people. By prayer, and the lifting up of his hands, the same *Moses* overthrew the host of the *Amalekites*. By prayer, *Joshua* stopped the course of the sun, and God was obe-

' dient to the voice of a man. By prayer, *Samson*
 ' revenged himself upon his enemies, and ruined the
 ' house of *Dagon* upon the *Philistines*. By prayer, *So-*
 ' *lomon* obtain'd an incomparable measure of wisdom
 ' from God. By prayer, *Hezekiah*, being at the point
 ' of death, had fifteen years more added to his life.
 ' By prayer, *Daniel* stopped the mouths of the lions;
 ' the three children quenched the fiery furnace, that
 ' not a hair of their head perished; *Jonah* was dis-
 ' charg'd of the whale's belly; and the prison gates
 ' opened of their own accord, to enlarge *St. Peter*.
 ' It is a panchreston, available for all things. It
 ' cureth diseases, dispossesseth devils; it sanctifieth the
 ' creatures unto us, unlocketh the gates of Heaven,
 ' and procureth the coming of the Holy Ghost. It
 ' is seasonable for all times, fit for all places, necessary
 ' to all persons; without it, no business, whatsoever
 ' we undertake, can thrive or prosper.'

Theod. This is an excellent and true character of
 this duty of prayer. And now, *Anchithanes*, seeing
 you have such encouragement, to pray to God in this
 your sickness, be sure to do it. And do it with a
 sound and unshaken faith, as being fully persuaded,
 that God will both graciously hear you, and will
 work in you what shall most conduce to his glory,
 and the salvation of your own immortal soul. For,
 depend upon it, he is the same Lord, yesterday, to-
 day, and for ever. (q) *His hand is not shortened, that*
it shall not help; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot
hear. No; (r) *Salvation still belongeth to the Lord,*
as much as ever; and his blessing is upon his people.
 Only let me desire of you, never to forget in whose
 hand you are, so as to take upon you to chuse for
 yourself; and not rather to commit yourself, and
 all your concerns, to the Divine disposal. And par-
 ticularly, as to your present state, be not solicitous for
 life. But, forasmuch as you know not what is most
 expedient for you, leave it to Almighty God to de-

(q) *Isa. lix. 1.*

(r) *Psalms iii. 8.*

termine

termine as shall best please him. And be content, in all your prayers, intirely to submit your judgment, and resign your choice, to the direction of his infinite wisdom; which will be sure to have a regard for your truest interest, incomparably beyond what any mortal friend can have. Remember the petition you have just now put up to him, for a *perfect submission to his will*, in whatever concerns this life or world. And never fail to prefer his will before your own; and to acquiesce, and satisfy yourself, in whatsoever it shall be his good pleasure to ordain for you; after the example of our blessed Lord, who a little before his passion, being nearly affected with the apprehension of his approaching crucifixion, prayed three times over to his Heavenly Father, and with great vehemence and earnestness, that those bitter pains and tortures he was like to suffer, might be prevented, and he might not be made to undergo them. Nevertheless, considering that his Father's will is ever best, and most eligible, and that the wills of all mankind are indispensably obliged to yield to it; he wished rather that the will of God might be accomplished, than his own, as he was man; and accordingly surrendered himself to suffer whatsoever should be appointed him. (s) *O my Father, says our Saviour, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* (t) *O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.* And again, the more exemplarily to shew his ready submission to the Divine Will, (u) *he prayed a third time, using the same words.*

Euseb. If we profess ourselves Christians, it will highly become us all, without doubt or hesitation, to follow this blessed pattern, which our great Lord and Master has set us, in all our prayers for temporal good things, of whatsoever kind. And this course therefore *Anchithanes* is necessarily concerned to take, in relation to his sickness at this time. If you pray to

(s) *Matth.* xxvi. 39. (t) *Ibid.* ver. 42. (u) *Ibid.* ver. 44.

God

God to remove your distemper, and restore you to your former health; that you may yet *live awhile longer*, may *see good days* here on earth, and have an opportunity of serving him better, than you have done formerly; you must not insist upon your own judgment in this case. You must go on to perfect your preparation for your latter end; and must then resign up yourself to God, tho' death should appear before you in ever so frightful a dress. Tho' you were to undergo the sharpest pains and dolours, in order to your dissolution; you ought, however, to remember, that it belongs not to you to chuse for yourself. And, indeed, considering how short-sighted we all are, and how apt to impose upon ourselves, it is well for us, that we have one who is infinitely wise, to chuse for us. Wherefore, set before yourself the example of our blessed Lord, when under abundantly greater agonies, than any you have felt; and behave yourself with the same humility and submission that he did. Call to mind how (x) *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*. And then look forward for your encouragement, and see what height of glory followed hereupon; how (y) *God also highly exalted him, and gave him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. Remember, moreover, what St. Peter tells us, of his submission to his Father's will; that he not only died to make atonement for our sins, but to set us a pattern for our imitation; that he (z) *suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps*.

(x) Phil. ii. 8.

(y) Ibid. ver. 9, 10.

(z) 1 Pet. ii. 21.

A Prayer for Patience and Resignation to the Divine Will.

I.

O Lord! thy will be done, and not mine. I confess, O Heavenly Father, that I have justly deserved much heavier punishment at thy hand, than this sickness I here groan under. If thou shouldst be extreme to mark what were done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? I am very sure, that I, poor, wretched sinner, cannot. I have sinned, O Lord; I have sinned against thy holy laws, and broken thy commandments, times without number; and am highly sensible, that whatsoever I suffer, I suffer deservedly; and should have done so, had it lain upon me much heavier than it does. Thou, O Lord, art righteous in all thou hast brought upon me: but I have done very foolishly, and have thereby given thee just occasion to have proceeded in a far severer manner against me. I humbly submit to the stroke of thy rod, beseeching thee to give me grace, now, and at all times, to bear whatever thou layest upon me, with both patience and thankfulness. Suffer me not so much as once to murmur, fret, or be dissatisfied, at thy disposal of me. But grant me, with the utmost submission and resignation to thy holy will, to wait thy good pleasure, and be always upon my watch, till my great change come; in a full assurance, that I suffer nothing, but by the direction of the perfectest wisdom and goodness; and what, if I be not wanting to myself, shall undoubtedly turn to the glory of thy great name, and the safety and welfare of my own soul, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for a sanctified Use of Sickness.

II.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God; who, as thou multipliest thy blessings and benefits upon mankind, dost likewise, at other times, send sickness and diseases; either for their correction
and

and amendment, or in order to their translation into another state; look upon me with an eye of pity, in this low and weak condition, whereto I am reduced. Make thou all my bed in my sickness. Comfort me, and support me, under this thy fatherly visitation. Sanctify it to me, that it may be a means of purifying my heart, and raising it up to the things above. And make thou me more and more in love with that other, better state; wherein I shall neither sin any more, nor be sick, or die any more. I know, O Lord, that of very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be troubled; and that my sickness shall never hurt me, unless through my own fault. Oh! suffer me not to be so much mine own enemy, as to turn it against myself: but, of thy infinite mercy, turn thou it to my advantage; that, as it gives me a prospect of my latter-end, so it may conduce to make me the fitter for it. Uphold my drooping spirits. Strengthen my weak and languishing soul. Confirm all my good purposes and resolutions. And grant, that the result of all may be glory to thee my God, and happiness and salvation to me thine unworthy and sinful creature, Deny me not this, I most humbly beseech thee, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

Euseb. God has hitherto been merciful to you; and you need not question but he will be so to the end.

Anchith. This is my great support.

Another to the same Purpose.

III.

LORD, I humbly pray thee, perfect what thou hast begun in me. O thou God of peace! Sanctify me wholly, that my whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Euseb. I hope, by this time, *Theodorus* has fully satisfied you, that you have no reason to conceive, that

that God Almighty has cast you out of his favour, though his hand lies somewhat heavy at present; or that he will not hear you, when you call upon him as you ought.

Anchitb. I thank you both for your kindness and patience towards me. And I must own myself convinced, that I have all the reason in the world, to bear patiently, whatsoever it pleases God to lay upon me. You have taught me, that sufferings are no sign of God's hatred; that he has declared himself ready to take care of all that faithfully put their trust in him; that he has made gracious promises to the *Jews*; and that these are not so appropriated to that people, but that we Christians have also a right to them; besides those others, which have been since made to ourselves; and that whatsoever prayers we put up to him aright, will certainly receive a gracious answer; either such as we desire, or such as shall be better for us. All which considerations you may easily suppose to be no small consolation to one in my weak and uneasy condition. But give me leave to be farther troublesome to you; for this is not all, nor indeed the main of what I desired, and wherein *Theodorus* kindly undertook to gratify me. For I want farther to be informed, how I may know, whether I be so far in God's favour, as that I may reasonably expect to be translated into a better state, when I shall be taken hence.

Theod. This is a matter of the highest importance that can be, and which ought to be seriously and thoroughly considered. And it is what I designed to speak to, so soon as the other should be dispatched, as now it is.

Anchitb. Wherefore, I hope, you will please now to enter upon it.

Theod. Our chief design in attending you, was to do you the best service we are capable of; and you will be very little obliged to us, if we should leave the principal branch of the question unconsidered.

Euseb.

Euseb. This, in short, is *Anchithanes's* second inquiry; How he may make a right judgment of himself, and the circumstances he is in, as to his future state; by what means he may distinguish, whether he is so intitled to the promises of the gospel, as that he may depend upon his having a right to the heavenly felicity, when he comes into the other world.

Anchith. Really, Sirs, I have now very little concern for this world, wherein it is probable I may not have many days to stay: but I would gladly be taught, how I may discern what is like to become of me, at my departure hence.

Euseb. And you are certainly to be greatly commended for employing your thoughts about your chief interest, and studying to *make your calling and election sure*; which is the great business you came into the world for, and upon the performance or neglect whereof depends a happy or miserable eternity.

Theod. Many have undertaken to resolve this inquiry; and a great part of them have done it with very little success. Wherefore, that I may duly caution against such mistakes as you might possibly be liable to, I must take liberty to observe, *that none ought to conclude himself in a state of grace, for some good motions that may now-and-then arise in his mind.* (a) *Abah* humbled himself at the preaching of the prophet *Elijah*, and rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly; *demisso capite*, says the vulgar bible, *hanging down his head*; *נָחַשׁ*, barefoot, says the *Chaldee* paraphrast; *step by step*, after the manner of mourners, says *Vatablus*; hereby testifying his inward grief, and fear for his injustice; tho' such as produced no restitution, or real amendment, in any respect. (b) *Simon Magus*, in acknowledgment of his wickedness, desired *St. Peter* to pray for him. (c) *Herod* heard *John Baptist* gladly, and did many things in obedience to the doctrine taught by

(a) 1 Kings xxi. 27. (b) Acts viii. 24. (c) Mark vi. 20.

him. (d) *Felix trembled, when he heard St. Paul reasoning of temperance, and righteousness, and judgment to come.* Yet they are all reprobates. Nor, on the contrary, may a man condemn himself for some coldness and dampness of spirit that he finds in himself, so long as his heart is truly set to serve the Lord; and he does it to the best of his power, at that time, tho' not so suitably to his desires. As our bodies are often out of order, and so less fit for their usual operations; so are our souls too; insomuch that the best Christians do not find themselves always alike disposed for God's service, nor able to worship him with the same sensible fervour and affection. Yet ought not such to be discouraged, or to distrust their own condition, because their minds, thro' the infirmity of the body, are not always in the same happy temper. They should rather argue with themselves, that, *this* not being in their power to remedy, their business is to bear it with a christian patience; and, though to be sincerely humbled for it, yet by no means to mistrust the mercy of God, or despair of the acceptance of their devotions, much less of their salvation, by reason of it. It is the *heart*, as I shall observe more fully anon, that God looks for; and *out of which*, as the wise man speaks, (e) *are the issues of life*; and so long as this is right, they need not distrust God's favour, by reason of such weaknesses and imperfections, as are naturally incident to this frail, mortal state; and so are unavoidable by us, whilst we remain in it. *Neither ought any one to think the better of himself, because his conscience sometimes recoils, and is uneasy, and checks and rebukes him for what he does amiss; and he cannot commit his sins with the same ease and unconcernedness that those about him do.* This shews him not to have sinned, himself, beyond all sense of duty, and that he is not yet *past feeling*; (f) but not that he is freed from the dominion of his sins.

(d) Acts xxiv. 25. (e) Prov. iv. 23. (f) Ephes. iv. 19.

(g) *Know ye not*, says St. Paul, *that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin, unto death; or of obedience, unto righteousness.* The question therefore is not, whether sin be obeyed willingly, or unwillingly; but whether it be obeyed at all: for, if it be, the man is yet the servant of sin; in like manner, as, among men, a servant is a servant, whilst he continues to serve his master, tho' possibly he may do it but with an unwilling mind. His checks of conscience may prove of very good use to him, if seriously attended to, because they naturally direct to an amendment of what he thus reproves himself for. And happy he, if he make a right improvement of them, by a subsequent care never to incur the like guilt again, whatsoever temptations he may meet with to it. But, unless they produce this good effect in him, they will but increase his guilt, and add to his condemnation; and, instead of intitling him to heaven, will set him at a greater distance from it. *Beloved*, says St. John, (b) *if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* As much as to say; If our heart condemn us, God, who observes all the motions of our heart, and knows all the wickedness that is entertained there, will be sure to condemn us too. Wherefore it will be impossible to interpret this doctrine to the comfort and satisfaction of him who sins against his conscience, and so stands self-condemned. His sinning, when thus warned against it, argues him to have a sense of his duty, and the unreasonableness and danger of transgressing it; and that hence he cannot sin upon so cheap and easy terms as others may. *Let no man, therefore, flatter himself*, says bishop Taylor, very justly, (i) 'that he is a regenerate person, because, tho' he is a servant to sin, and acts at the command of his lusts, and cannot resist in the evil day, and stand the shock of a tempta-

(g) Rom. vi. 16.
ch. 7. sect. 5. n. 35.

(b) 1 John iii. 20.

(i) Unum Necessar.

tion, yet he finds an unwillingness within him, and a strife again sin.—Every such person is a servant of sin, and, therefore, not a servant of the Spirit; but free from, that is, not ruled by the law of righteousness. *And again, If an unregenerate person did always sin willingly, that is, without reluctance, and strife within; and the regenerate did sin as infallibly, but yet fore against his will; then the regenerate person were the verier slave of the two; for he that obeys willingly, is less a slave, than he that obeys in spite of his heart. A wicked man may not be so hardened in his wickedness, nor his conscience so seared, but that he may, sometimes, find strong reluctancies in himself, before he can bring himself to comply with a temptation. But if he do, however, work himself up to such a compliance, this shews the greater malignity of his heart, and that he is yet in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. Some sins too are of so heinous a nature, and offer such violence to the soul not fully settled upon its lees, that a man may be wicked to a great degree, and yet not be able to venture upon these, without a struggle and conflict within himself, before he can resolve to commit them. In which cases, the sinner not only remains a sinner still, notwithstanding these reproofs from his conscience; but he is so much the greater sinner, from having broke thro' all those impediments to get at his sin. A man may likewise not only be taught his duty, but convinc'd, moreover, of the necessity of performing it; and that he is a pernicious enemy to his own soul, if he do it not; may approve of what is excellent, and commend and admire it in others; as it is well known, that many applaud virtue in their thoughts and words, that yet shew but little regard for it in their actions; may forsake divers of his less tempting sins, and sometimes such as are not to be cast off without some violence offer'd to himself, and his corrupt inclinations; may be observant of the ordinary offices of religion; may bestow some charities, and sometimes seek to make up differences amongst his neighbours;*

neighbours; (k) may fast, and pay tithes, as the proud pharisee did, and do many other good deeds, and yet come short of Heaven. His obedience must be serious, and uniform, and constant, whatsoever temptations he meets with to the contrary, if he would not be found of the number of those, who (l) shall seek to enter in at the straight gate, and shall not be able. He must renounce all his most beloved lusts; must (m) abstain from all appearance of evil; and must (n) perfect holiness in the fear of God, by (o) keeping the commandments, before he can hope to enter into life. Neither may we presume ourselves safe, because of our love to the instrumental duties of religion, such as hearing and reading God's word, attending upon the preaching of it, receiving the blessed sacrament, &c. so long as we have not a like (p) regard to all God's commandments. One spends a great part of his time in hearing sermons, running from one church to another; as if the whole of Christianity consisted in inquiring after God's will, rather than in a diligent and conscientious performance of it; and so, being (q) a bearer of the word, but not a doer of it, deceives his own self. Another is very observant of his times of devotion, both in publick and private; and is careful to admonish his neighbours, and invite and encourage them to a like deportment: and so far is well. But yet, how good an opinion soever he has of himself upon this account, he ought to know, that it is not enough, that these duties be performed; but an eye must also be had to the end of them, which is the making us (r) holy in all manner of conversation; and till they produce this good effect in us, the true intent and design of them is not answer'd. Again, another is very desirous to partake of the holy eucharist upon all opportunities, and accordingly is sure to be there whenever it is administred, and carries himself very de-

(k) Luke xviii. 12. (l) Chap. xiii. 24. (m) 1 Thes. v. 22.
 (n) 2 Cor. vii. 1. (o) Matth. xix. 17. (p) Psal. cxix. 6.
 (q) James i. 22. (r) 1 Pet. i. 15.

voutly at it. He takes care too to prepare himself, for some time beforehand, for this holy ordinance, by a diligent examination into his own heart and ways, a renunciation of all his sins, and a resolution and promise of better obedience for the future; and hence he concludes himself a good Christian, and a happy man. Yet, let such a one remember, that except he reduce his good purposes to practice, unless his life be all of a piece, and he approve himself a saint out of the church or closet, as well as in it; he is yet but an ill proficient in the school of Christ. These forementioned, and the other like duties, are indeed of great weight in our religion, and necessary parts of it; and are of such excellent use in order to our growth in grace, that he who performs them as he ought, may justly be said to be *not far from the kingdom of Heaven*, and its eternal felicity. And yet, as near as he is, if he depend upon these duties, and have nothing else to make out his title to that blessed place, he will never come thither. But whatsoever notion either himself, or others, may have had of him, because of such his deportment, here in this world, he will find himself in a deplorable condition when he comes into the other. (s) *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. And he that turneth away his ear from bearing the law, that is, from attending to and obeying it, (t) even his prayer shall be an abomination.* Almighty God, by the prophet *Isaiab*, most expressly declares against this sort of religion, as no way acceptable to him; and directs to that which is more real and substantial: as whosoever pleases may see in the first chapter of *Isaiab*, the thirteenth and seven following verses. And in the New Testament, says our Saviour, (u) *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* And again, (x) *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my*

(s) Prov. xv. 8.
(x) Matth. vii. 21.

(t) Chap. xxviii. 9.

(u) Luke vi. 46.

Father which is in Heaven. It is not professing his name, and worshipping and praying to him, that will capacitate us for salvation; nor any thing less than a sincere and universal observance of the precepts he has given us in charge. *Much less may any one expect to be saved for his adherence to a sect or party, and his zeal for promoting its interests, and especially by unjustifiable and wicked means.* (y) *It is certainly good to be jealously affected always; but then we must be sure it be in a good thing, and (z) according to knowledge; for otherwise the consequents of it may be very terrible.* It was (a) *St. Paul's* zeal that put him upon persecuting the church of *Christ*. Yet he was so far from valuing himself for it, that he calls himself (b) *the chief of sinners*, and professes of himself, that he was (c) *not worthy to be called an apostle*; and for this very reason, *because he had persecuted the church of God*. Men may possibly please themselves with such a zeal, and may think themselves no mean Christians for it; but it is a very indifferent sign, that *Christ Jesus* is truly formed in them. Schisms and divisions are so highly displeasing to Almighty God, that throughout (d) *St. Paul's* epistles, perhaps you will not find any one sin, against which he so frequently cautions his readers, as against this. And in the antient church it was esteemed of that heinous nature, (e) that martyrdom itself was not thought a sufficient expiation of it. And such must therefore be most destructive casuists, who can look upon embarking in so dangerous an evil, as a token of a holy and good mind. It is what sincere and well-meaning persons may sometimes fall into; but it is certainly no part of their goodness, but a great blemish to it, and a lessening all their brightest virtues. So far is

(y) Gal. iv. 18. (z) Rom. x. 2. (a) Phil. iii. 6. (b) 1 Tim. i. 15. (c) 1 Cor. xv. 9. (d) Rom. xv. 5, 6. and xvi. 17, 18. 1 Cor. i. 10. and iii. 3. and xi. 18. Gal. v. 20. Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6. Phil. ii. 1, and iii. 16.

(e) B. Cypr. Epist. 55 and 60. Optat. Milev. c. Parmen. l. 1. Chrysost. in Ephes. hom. 11.

it from being any sort of evidence for their justification and salvation.

Euseb. Has this zeal for a party ever been laid down, as a test of our disposition in order to a future state?

Theod. Never that I know of in so many words; but the great regard that is ordinarily shewn to it by those of the same party, and the encouragement they usually give to one another, as if all that suffer'd in such a case were martyrs for Christ, seems so naturally to imply it, that this gave me occasion to caution against such a self-deceit.

Euseb. But seeing there are so many sects and heresies, divisions and subdivisions, do not you think, that every one is nearly concern'd to adhere faithfully to what he is fully satisfied is right, and to promote it to his power, whether by doing or suffering? And if he die for it, may he not look upon this, as laying down his life for Christ; and consequently may he not reckon himself one of those to whom our Saviour has promised, that by laying down their (f) *lives for his sake*, they *shall save them* to all eternity.

Theod. No doubt, every one is nearly concern'd, to (g) *contend earnestly for the faith that was once deliver'd to the saints*, and to be ready to suffer and die for it. This is so necessary, that our Saviour assures us over and over, that such as decline suffering here for his sake, shall suffer for ever hereafter for their own folly. For this is the plain import of those words of his, (b) *Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it*; (i) *He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*; (k) *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*, with other like expressions. Wherefore I must beg leave to observe to you, that what I have said as to this point, was intended only for

(f) Mark viii. 35. and Luke ix. 24. (g) Jude 3. (b) Matth. xvi. 25. (i) Chap. x. 38. (k) Luke ix. 26.

these purposes. First, to remind persons that they are to be very well assur'd they are in the right, before they take upon them to appear zealous for their own notions and practices, and those of their party, how numerous soever, and whatsoever specious shew of an unfeigned piety they may make. This they are obliged to take an especial care of, and to use their utmost diligence and impartiality, in order to a right information of themselves, lest otherwise they really sin against God, whilst they think themselves *(l)* *doing him service*; and incur that dreadful woe, which our blessed Saviour denounced against the *Scribes and Pharisees*, for their unwearied diligence in proselyting others to their sect, and pressing their wonted strictnesses upon them: *(m)* *Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites: for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.* Next, to caution that they be not contentious and quarrelsome, when in the right, but temper their zeal with prudence and gentleness, and a tenderness of heart towards such as differ from them; that their zeal, in ever so just a cause, do not transport them beyond the bounds of their duty, and put them upon any indirect and unlawful means, for the maintenance of what they have undertaken; studying by all fair ways, but none other than such, to justify themselves and their profession, as becomes the followers of the meek and holy *Jesus*. But that which I chiefly intended is, in the last place, that none ever expect their zeal for the best of causes, the weightiest of truths, or the most truly christian doctrines, should ever make atonement for their vices and immoralities. Right principles will by no means suit wrong practices. And let a man be ever so orthodox in his belief, or regular in his worship, or constant to some discountenanced christian duty, all the concern he can shew, in behalf of such decr'd part of his religion, will never recommend him to Almighty God,

(l) John. xvi. 2.

(m) Matth. xxiii. 15.

if in other respects he allows himself to transgress his laws. And I have therefore often wonder'd to see such as could suffer to a great degree, for the sake of a good conscience, to be yet so unconscientious as to indulge themselves in customary swearing or intemperance, cheating, or other like immoral and shameful courses. If such do not think to make amends, for their looseness in one respect, by their exactness in the other, I cannot tell why they should chuse to suffer as they have done: and yet, if they do think it, they grossly deceive themselves, as they will be sure at length to find to their cost. But I have already insisted too long upon this fifth particular; wherefore I leave it, and proceed: *We are by no means to judge ourselves in God's favour, and heirs of the glory he has promis'd to his faithful servants, from our regard to men of exemplary piety, and the great veneration we have for them.* This, I remember, has sometimes been laid down as a rule, whereby for Christians to take a view of the state of their souls. But with how little reason, will evidently appear, if you but call to mind, that the most profligate wretches cannot but ever and anon betray the reverence they inwardly bear to such as, at other times, they would be thought to have the greatest aversion to, and whom they would represent as fools and madmen, for *not running into the same excess of riot with themselves.* Virtue commands a respect, even from the incorrigibly wicked, which, with all their arts, they cannot so totally suppress, as that it shall not frequently discover itself. And tho' others, who are not so entirely devoted to their lusts, may have a greater veneration than these, for such as they see truly holy and religious; the most that can be collected from hence is, that they are not so wholly abandoned to their vices as these; not that they have made such proficiency in Christianity, as to capacitate them for the heavenly felicity. *Nor, farther, may a man reckon himself safe, purely from his reliance upon Christ for salvation.* A doctrine the holy Scriptures never taught,

tho' some men have! It is true, it is Christ alone that has purchased this salvation for us; and who freely offers it to such as will be prevail'd with to capacitate themselves for it. He calls and invites, and presses and beseeches sinners to be reconciled to God. But then it is to be consider'd, that this *being reconciled to God*, implies more in it, than a bare reliance upon Christ. It implies in it no less than a hearty and sincere repentance, and amendment of life; which is often (n) enjoined in Scripture, and (o) without which there is no possibility of being saved. And accordingly, our Lord himself declares, that whosoever (p) *will enter into life, must keep the commandments*. This is a necessary condition of the gospel-covenant, which whosoever does not faithfully set himself to perform, can have no hope of Salvation. And tho' it be said, that (q) *by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified*, but only by *the faith of Jesus Christ*, this is very far from implying, that our justification, and consequently our Salvation, does not depend upon the works of the Gospel, when our Saviour and his apostles so constantly teach it does. Not that any services we are capable of paying, can any way merit our salvation, this being the purchase of Christ's blood, and which is to be obtained only through his mediation; but only they are the indispensable condition of obtaining it, our blessed Lord having undoubtedly assured us, that he will bestow it upon no other terms, (r) but of *repentance* unto life, as well as *faith*, and dependence upon him for it. And agreeably hereto is the apostle St. Paul to be understood, when he professes his desire, (s) *to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of*

(n) Matth. iii. 8. and iv. 17. and ix. 13. Mark i. 15. and vi. 12. Acts ii. 38. and xvii. 30. and xx. 21. and xxvi. 20. Rev. ii. 5. and xvi. 11. and iii. 19.

(o) Mark i. 4. Luke xiii. 3, 5. and xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 19. and v. 31. and xi. 18. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

(p) Matth. xix. 17. (q) Gal. ii. 16. (r) Acts xx. 21, (s) Phil. ii. 9.

God

God by faith. Where it is plain the apostle does not distinguish between faith in Christ, and obedience to the precepts of his gospel, of which faith in Christ is one, but purely between a legal and evangelical obedience. And the righteousness he disclaims, is not his observance of the laws of the gospel, but, as himself tells us, such as is (t) *of the law*, that Jewish law wherein he had been educated, and *had lived* a strict observer of its rites and ceremonies, *a pharisee*. All these, says he, I now despise, in comparison of the inestimable advantages that are to be expected by the purer, and more divine, and heavenly religion of the gospel; that religion which consists in a belief of the Christian doctrine, and obedience to its commands. A doctrine that has taught our duty more plainly than the law did, has given far greater encouragement to, and has promised greater assistance in the performance of it, and has shewn us how our failings and defects may be pardoned thro' Christ, if we but take care to serve him sincerely, according to our power. And, in this sense, is that other text, referred to likewise, by the *assembly of divines*, in their *larger Catechism*, to be taken; (u) *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*. And that other saying of St. Paul and Silas to the convert jailor, (x) *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. In neither of which places is faith to be taken as an act of reliance upon Christ, which, the apostle St. James assures us, (y) *is dead when alone*, and not accompanied with good works; but it is an embracing the doctrine of the gospel, and a submission to all its precepts and injunctions, (z) as without which there is no pleasing God, or hope of being accepted with him. In a word, a resolution of all our grounds of salvation, into a mere dependence upon Christ, is no less than a total subversion of his Gospel; which does most certainly require this dependence upon

(t) Acts xxvi. 5. (u) Acts x. 43. (x) Chap. xvi. 31. (y) James ii. 14. (z) Heb. xii. 14.

him for the forgiveness of our sins, and the acceptance of our defective imperfect services, when we have used our own unfeigned endeavours, to qualify ourselves for his mercy; but, from one end of it to the other, inculcates the miserable condition of such as indulge themselves in any sort of sin, and so are not meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Of such it assures us, beyond all contradiction, that they (a) *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that believe.* So that nothing can be more vain and unreasonable, than an expectation of happiness by means of such a faith, as is of no avail, when separated from that obedience, which the Gospel all along so necessarily requires in order to salvation. I am sure, in our blessed Saviour's account of the last judgment, he teaches, (b) that all shall have their final sentence passed upon them according to their having done, or not done, what was required of them. And the apostle St. Paul affirms as expressly as may be, that (c) *we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive his reward, not according to his faith strictly taken, but according to his obedience in general: for so it follows, according to that he hath done in the body, whether it be good or bad.* It is not therefore faith alone that will obtain our salvation; but faith together with its effects, a faith that is productive of good works; that is to say, such a belief in Christ, as teaches us not only to rely upon his merits, but to serve him faithfully all the days of our life. Again, *It is a very false judgment he makes, who concludes himself at present to be in a state of grace, and the right way to salvation, only because he is sensible he once was so.* This has been positively laid down as an infallible test, and much insisted upon, by divers authors of no small character in their time, but without any just reason;

(a) 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. (b) Matt. xxv. 31, &c. (c) 2 Cor. v. 10.

for there is nothing more certain, than that (d) a righteous man may turn away from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and die in it. And tho' (e) the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and he will never reject such, as shew themselves worthy partakers of his favour, whilst they retain their integrity; yet, on the other hand, (f) from him that hath not, that is, that makes not a good improvement of what grace he is intrusted with, shall be taken away even that he hath. And tho' (g) whom God once loves, he loves to the end, if they continue proper objects of his love; yet this will never prove, that he will still go on to love them, how heinously soever they sin against him. For which reason our Saviour cautions his disciples, so to demean themselves, as that he may have no occasion to withdraw his affection from them. (b) As the Father hath loved me, saith our Saviour, so I have loved you: continue ye in my love. As if our Saviour should have said, Take care to do these things, which ye know pleasing to me, that so I may yet continue to love you. And how this is to be done, the following words declare; (i) If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. This is the only way to have his love continued to us to the last. And whosoever acts otherwise, has all the reason in the world to satisfy himself, that he is working out his own destruction; and that therefore his having been formerly in God's love, will stand him in no farther stead, when he has again shewn himself unworthy of it. The Scripture teaches very plainly, that men may (k) run well at the first, and yet afterwards be hindered, that they shall not obey the truth; that some, after they have been once in the right way, may nevertheless (l) draw back unto perdition, as well as others go on to the saving of their souls. Men may have proceeded so far, as not only to have been

(d) Ezek. xviii. 26. (e) Rom. xi. 29. (f) Matth. xiii. 12.
 (g) John xiii. 1. (h) John xv. 9. (i) Ver. 10. (k) Gal. v. 7.
 (l) Heb. x. 39.

enlightened, or baptized into the Christian church, but to (m) *have tasted of the heavenly gift*, enjoying the privileges of Christians, pardon of sin, and peace of conscience, *and been made partakers of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, as the age of the Gospel is called, having had experience of the promises of Christ, and the wonderful works of mercy wrought for mankind by him; and yet may *fall away* so desperately, that it shall be *impossible to renew them again to repentance*. Let no one therefore deceive himself with this, that he was once a child of God, and heir of glory, and for this reason must be always so. For unless he retain his sense of duty to the last, he will find himself upon the left-hand, when he comes at the great day to appear before his Judge. It is *he only (n) who endures to the end, that shall be saved*. And all else will have their hopes dreadfully disappointed, when they come to hear their final sentence passed upon them. They may have deluded themselves in their life-time, with the thoughts of having been once in the way of righteousness; but will at length be convinced, to their eternal sorrow, that they have not been so wise as they thought themselves. For supposing they are not mistaken concerning their former state, and that they were once in as good a condition as they imagine, their apostatizing afterwards is at least as certain a sign, they are now out of the way of salvation, as their utmost attainments in religion ever could be, that they were at any time in it. *Nor, again, may a man conclude himself safe, because he is sorry for his sins, after he has committed them*. This I own is highly commendable in him, and the best thing he can do, next to forsaking them; and gives good hopes of his amendment; yet it is really no more, than the most profligate wretches can sometimes say of themselves. Those *ictus & laniatus*, those intolerable stings of conscience, which frequently pursue them, in spite of all

(m) Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

(n) Matth. x. 22.

the care they can take to stifle and suppress them, are an undeniable proof, that a man may be greatly troubled for his sins, without being a true penitent. Judas, we all know, was so; and no one questions to what place he went, when he left this world. Wherefore in the last place, *The only true and certain test whereby to make a right judgment of ourselves, is that which our blessed Saviour directs, for the discovery of false prophets; but which is alike useful for shewing all others to themselves, so as that by the help hereof they may discern, how the case stands with them, as to the safety or loss of their souls; namely, by the fruits they produce.* By the uprightness or obliquity of his conversation, each one may make a safe trial of himself; and no other way that I know of. (o) *By their fruits ye shall know them*, says our Saviour: *Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is cut down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* A good or bad tree is not more naturally distinguishable by the quality of the fruit it yields, than a good or a bad man, a saint or a reprobate, by the constant tenor of his conversation. And to seek after any other sort of test, for the trial of our present, or discovery of our future state, is but to put a fallacy upon ourselves, and perhaps by that means to expose ourselves to eternal destruction. It is he, and he only, (p) *who feareth God, and worketh righteousness, that is accepted with him.* Hence, says St. Paul, (q) *Our rejoicing, the ground of our comfort and boasting (r), is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;* 'Not as worldly wisdom would direct, says (s) Dr. Hammond, but according to the Gospel rules, we have behaved ourselves towards all

(o) Matth. vii. 16, &c.

(p) Acts x. 35.

(q) 2 Cor. i. 12:

(r) Ἡ καὶ ἡλικία ἡμῶν.

(s) In loc.

men; and this I can say with joy and comfort.' And so says St. John, when laying down the marks whereby to discern a child of God from a child of the devil; (t) *Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God; whereby also is implied, on the contrary, that whosoever doth righteousness, is of God. Whence it follows, that a true member of Christ, and heir of the kingdom of Heaven, must be one who has so far got the mastery over all his corrupt inclinations and passions, that he is fully set upon doing God's will to the utmost of his power; not daring to allow himself in any known violation of his Lord's commands, tho' when under the greatest pressure and temptation. With Job, he resolves to (u) *bold fast his integrity, and not let it go; and that his heart shall not reprove him so long as he lives.* With David, he (x) *sets God always before him, that in nothing he may dare to provoke his Divine Majesty; who, he considers, is present with him.* And, with St. Paul, he (y) *exercises himself always to have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man.* He be-thinks himself, that the promises of God are made to the faithful and obedient; and till he shall acquit himself as such, he can have no pretence of claim to them. And this convinces him of the necessity of keeping a diligent watch over himself, that he not only never indulge himself in any known sin, but that he be not, for want of due care, betray'd into it, through ignorance, infirmity, or inadvertency. And if he be so*

(t) 1 John iii. 7, &c.

(u) Job xxvii. 6.

(x) Psal. xvi. 8.

(y) Acts xxiv. 16.

unhappy as to fall, before he is aware of it, into any kind of sin, he immediately repents of it, laments and bewails it, sues most earnestly to God for forgiveness, and keeps a peculiar watch over himself in that particular, that he may incur the like guilt no more. This he knows is the only way to *make his calling and election sure*; and accordingly he resolutely applies himself to it, and will upon no terms be diverted from it. In a word he seriously lays to heart, and takes care to follow, the advice given by the prophet *Isaiah*, (2) *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Euseb. This we all know, that to turn from our iniquities, and walk holily before God, in the more difficult, as well as the easier duties of religion, is the sure way to please him, and secure an interest in his favour. But how shall a man know certainly when he has done this! Could he indeed perform his duty without any failure in it, it were easy for him to pronounce of himself, that he was in the right way to everlasting peace and glory. As also, on the other hand, it is easy for a wicked man to know, into what a miserable condition he has brought himself, and that till he alters his course, and enters upon a new and more holy conversation, he can look upon himself as no better than a lost undone wretch, a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. But now betwixt those two different states, it is in some cases, and at some times, a difficult matter to determine, on which side of it the man is; that is to say, whether he has arrived to such a degree of goodness, as that he is in safety, or his guilt still adheres to him, and so he is every moment in danger of dropping into Hell. And how shall he do to make a right judgment of himself in so nice a case?

(2) *Isa. lv. 6, 7.*

Anchitb. You say very right, *Eusebius*. This is so common a case, and yet withal so difficult to be clearly stated, that I must again intreat *Theodorus's* determination of it.

Theod. This, I confess, is the main difficulty. And that I may set it in the best light I can, I shall deliver what I have to say to it by way, first, of advice, and then of direct answer to your inquiry.

Euseb. Pray what is it you would advise?

Theod. This is very obvious; and I wish all persons were as ready to follow it, as they are capable of seeing the reasonableness and admirable usefulness of it. It is no other than this, that every one would set himself in good earnest, not to relapse into sin; or, if he can, to be still making greater improvements in religion, to *grow in grace*, purging himself, as far as he shall be able, from all the remainders of his sins, and studying to increase daily in virtue and goodness. By this means his evidences for Heaven will become so incontestable, that he needs have no doubt about them: which would be the best and most effectual resolution of this enquiry, that it is capable of.

Euseb. I thank you, *Theodorus*, for your necessary and most useful advice. And if you be but as happy in your answer, we shall be highly indebted to you.

Theod. What I have to answer in the first place is, That so long as a man allows himself in any one known sin, of whatever nature it be, he may depend upon it, that he is but in a bad condition, and has all the reason in the world to set upon a speedy reformation; lest otherwise he be snatch'd away in his sin, and so be for ever miserable. For there is nothing more certain, than that whilst he allows himself in the wilful transgression of any part of his duty, no sorrow for it, or supplications for pardon, will restore him to God's favour. As *St. Paul* teaches, that, (a) if a man bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and though he give his body to be burned, and hath not charity, it profiteth him

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

nothing;

nothing; so may I say, though a man shew ever such tokens of trouble and anguish for his sins, tho' he *water his couch with his tears*, and humble himself in sackcloth and ashes, yet unless he renounce and forsake them, all his grief will turn to no account to him, as to his everlasting welfare. It may either stave off temporal evils, as it fared with (b) *Abab*, and the (c) *Ninevites*; or may lessen them, as in the case of (d) *David*, and of (e) *Rehoboam*, and the princes of *Israel*; but will never entitle him to eternal happiness. It is not his being sorrowful for what he has done amiss, in what degree soever it be, that will denominate him a child of God, unless he constantly take care to do so no more. (f) *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right*, we know assuredly, that he shall save his soul alive; but I do not see what ground he can have to hope for salvation upon any easier condition. And hereto agrees that of St. *Peter* to the Jews, (g) *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*; plainly intimating the insufficiency of whatever repentance, that is not attended with conversion and amendment. And our blessed Lord himself severely rebukes such as professed a great zeal and honour for him, but did not give a due attendance to his laws, so as stedfastly to practise whatever he had required of them: (b) *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* Whence it necessarily follows, that we must never dare to allow ourselves in any one sin whatever, as if we could hope to be saved whilst we continue in it.

Euseb. This is a very proper and necessary direction; but is not sufficient to satisfy the consciences of most inquirers. And the reason is plain, because the weakness of our nature is such, and the subtilty of our adversary, and his temptations, are so prevalent, that

(b) 1 Kings xxi. 27, 28, 29. (c) Jonah iii. 10. (d) 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. (e) 2 Chron. xii. 6, 7, 8. (f) Ezek. xviii. 27. (g) Acts iii. 19. (b) Luke vi. 46.

even when people have resolved well, and set themselves seriously to put their good resolutions in execution, yet they too often find the sad effects of their frailty, in relapsing into some of those sins they had but a little before so avowedly renounced. It is to their shame and sorrow that they fall in this manner; yet it is plain they do it. Your opinion therefore is desired concerning such, whether they are to look upon themselves as in a state of salvation, or not.

Theod. This is a case that has its difficulties; and I should, for that reason, be glad to see it well determined by some more learned and judicious casuist. But however, since you have put it to me, I will endeavour to give you the best light into it that I can. Here therefore I must observe, that whensoever the relapses proceed from a direct and deliberate choice of the will, though it be but now-and-then, if I say, that in this case the person falls from his state of salvation, till he shall have made his peace with God, by a hearty repentance and sorrow for them, and new resolutions of a better obedience for the future, this is no more than to me seems to be fully warranted by what the prophet *Ezekiel* proclaims in the name of God to the *Jews*, and by parity of reason to all mankind: (i) *The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression—neither shall the righteous be able to live in the day that he sinneth.* And the learned *Dr. Hammond* had therefore good reason to speak of such a sin, as (k) *sauciating and wounding the soul, putting it for a time into a bloody direful condition, such as that should God before repentance strike, for ought we know, there would be no remission; and so, fearful would be the end of that soul.* And so says *Bishop Taylor*: (l) ‘When he [*the penitent*] prevails regularly and daily over his sin, then is he in a state of regeneration; but let him take heed, for every voluntary or chosen sin is a mortal wound.’ But to

(i) *Ezek.* xxxiii. 12.
Necessar. cap. 7. sect. 7.

(k) *Of Conscience*, § 46.

(l) *Un-*

put the case somewhat more favourably: Supposing these relapses are not purely of a direct and deliberate choice, but proceed only from a want of due care to prevent them, by guarding the avenues that lead to them, and setting ourselves resolutely to oppose such temptations, as threaten to betray us into them; yet still I see no sufficient reason to convince me, that they are not of a deadly and pernicious consequence, and a ready way to everlasting destruction, till sincerely repented of. I make no question, but Almighty God will soon be prevailed with to forgive them, where he sees the mind rightly disposed, though perhaps not yet come to that perfection it is to labour after. But till he is humbly and penitentially sought to for pardon, I am very much afraid, that these sins tho' not so commonly repeated as formerly, not so deliberately and resolutely, will nevertheless expose the actor to eternal torment, as certainly, tho' not to the same measure of them. At least it is not so certain, that they will not, as that a man may venture his salvation upon it. And I am therefore very sure, that each one, upon every relapse of this nature, ought to look upon himself as indispensably obliged, to rise out of it with all the speed that may be, whereby to recover, that happy state, from which he has fallen, and to give himself no manner of rest till he has done it. But to proceed one step farther, and state the case yet more favourably: Suppose the man does heartily resolve against these sins, and strive to conquer them, and has done it to a good degree; but wonted evil habits, his sinful companions, and his own corrupt nature, ever and anon prevail against his good purposes and endeavours; and so he falls, tho' but seldom, into some single acts of them; here you would know what such an one may think of himself.

Euseb. This is what I desire.

Anchitb. And what I shall be glad to hear well determined.

Theod. Now of such an one I must needs believe, that he is in the right way towards the kingdom of Heaven. But I am sorry I must add, moreover, that unless he keep on his pace more steadily, and be more wary of the impediments he meets in his passage, or at least be very quick in turning back, whenever he finds himself out of his road, I cannot but much doubt, whether ever he will enter into that blessed place. He is got to the very borders of salvation; but nevertheless if he rest there, and do not step over to the other side, he will still be in danger of falling into the pit, which he has almost escaped, but has not yet left quite behind him. These relapses being the effects of his former vicious habits, it seems to me, that he is to answer for them upon that account; because, tho' not indulged at present, it is however his own fault, that they ever got, and still retain, such power over him. And it is therefore very suspicious, that each of these is a return into that state, out of which he had scarce rescued himself. Such an imperfect penitent is like a man, that has ventured too far into the water, and is in danger of drowning, labouring for life; but whether he shall hold out to recover the shore, is uncertain; or like him that takes a great deal of pains to get up the hill before him, but slips, and is ready at every step to tumble down again, when come almost to the top of it. He has in a manner subdued his enemy, yet has not so totally disabled him, but that he is still to take heed, that he be not unexpectedly slain by him. He may have some hopes in God's mercy, but not without a great mixture of fear, lest the progress he has hitherto made, be not sufficient to qualify him for those blessed mansions, which are promised only *(m)* to him that overcometh. And his only sure course in this case, is, to complete his repentance, to resolve, and watch, and strive, and fast, and pray, against these remainders of his evil habits, and never give over, till, by shaking them quite

(m) Rev. iii. 21. and xxi. 7.

off,

off, he has cleared his title to a better state. This is the safest resolution of all his doubts, and will make it easy for him to determine, what portion he is to expect, when he comes into the other world. But till this be done, no wonder if he be full of perplexities and distrusts, lest after death he should awake in everlasting misery and sorrow. I will not take upon me to give my opinion positively against him in the mean time; but I must say, his case is so very doubtful and dangerous, that I dare not assure him of salvation, till he shall have got out of it. I would much rather beg of him to put an end to the question himself, by going on to such a complete victory over his lusts, as may shew him to be indeed *born of God*. Which till he does, he will find this effect of his *imperfect partial* obedience, that if it does not exclude him out of Heaven, as there is too just cause to fear it will, unless a speedy repentance follow upon his miscarriages, he will be left, in the mean time, in the dark, as to his future state, and will have his mind perpetually haunted with jealousies and suspicions of what will become of him, when he shall be taken hence. I speak not any thing of this to dishearten persons, when they come to lie upon their sick-bed, and are taking a review of their lives past, in order to their departure hence; but out of pure charity and love to them who are in health, to put them upon an effectual preparation for this time, that they may neither have their great work to do, when in this condition, nor may go out of the world with false hopes and expectations, crying to themselves *Peace, Peace, when there is no peace*; as in truth there cannot be, when there is any one known sin unrepented of. Forasmuch as, till a penitent has overcome his former vicious habits, though earnestly and seriously endeavouring it he can never clear his title to a better state, it highly imports him therefore to go on striving, and give no rest to his soul, till he has got the mastery over them.

Euseb. But what say you to sins of ignorance, surprize, and infirmity? How shall a man do to emerge out of these, since, after all the care that can be taken, we are still liable to them, and cannot rid ourselves of them?

Theod. No, nor ever shall, whilst we continue in this world. These are such fruits of our present feeble constitution, as will not fail to attend us all the days of our lives. But then it is to be considered, that there is a great disparity betwixt these and wilful sins, both as to their guilt, and as to the danger of them.

Euseb. I do not doubt but all wilful sins are much more offensive to Almighty God, than those that are involuntary, and are far more destructive to the sinner. And my question therefore was not intended to mean what comparison there is between them; but purely as to the latter, under what censure they fall, and what is like to be the effect of them? We all find, to our sorrow, that we cannot live free from them in this mortal state; and it is therefore of great concernment to all, to know what judgment Almighty God will pass upon us for them. And this is what I intended to intreat your answer to; and I hope I shall obtain it.

Theod. It is a miserable case, and a great unhappiness, that we are not able to serve God with a perfect and intire obedience, as the law requires. But it is what we all find too true; and have therefore abundant cause to be deeply humbled for it. Yet let me tell you, that our case is by no means desperate upon this account. It is a merciful and gracious God, to whom we are accountable for all our failings. And, for ever praised be his holy name! he has found out a remedy for us, by the death of our blessed Saviour, through whom we need not fear the remission of such sins, as are unfeignedly repented of, and thenceforth watchfully resisted to the utmost of our power. This is the difference betwixt the first and second covenant.

nant, that the one required a perfect sinless obedience, without making allowance, so much as for the unavoidable infirmities of human nature; but the other freely promises forgiveness to such as are (n) *pure in heart*, and (o) *hunger and thirst after righteousness*. And so long as they are sincere and hearty in the performance of their duty, they need not doubt of their reward, though they have not attained to that perfection, as to serve God with the same exactness that the blessed beings above do. He considers our frame and constitution, and does not expect the service of angels, but of men, from us; and will be sure to make his allowances accordingly, where he observes an unfeigned desire to please him: insomuch that whosoever acquits himself to the best of his ability, may safely comfort and encourage himself in a full assurance, that *if there be first a willing mind*, a sincere and unfeigned desire and endeavour to approve himself a true disciple of the ever-blessed Jesus, (p) *it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. If it were not so, there were no hope of salvation for the best of men; inasmuch as there is no man living, how righteous soever in other respects, that offendeth not thro' unavoidable infirmity. (q) *There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not*, as the wise man teaches. And again to the same purpose, (r) *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* As much as to say, none can truly affirm, that he has no such unruly affections or passions remaining in him, that sometimes unexpectedly discompose his righteous soul, and transport him beyond his just bounds. This, as the wise man notes, is what none can pretend to on this side Heaven. And so says St. John, (s) *If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; and again, *If we say, that we have not sinned,*

(n) Matth. v. 8. (o) Ver. 6. (p) 2 Cor. viii. 12. (q) Eccles. vii. 20. (r) Prov. xx. 9. (s) 1 John i. 8, 10.

we make him a liar, and his truth is not in us : which words are spoken so indefinitely, as to shew, that they extend to mankind in general, teaching that there are none that live free from all manner of sin. And yet, as if this were not enough, the apostle St. James affirms it to be universally true, that there is none, no one of all mankind, who has not his defects and slips. (t) *In many things*, says he, *we offend all*; *Ἀπαντες πταίομεν*, *we all*, the best and holiest not excepted, have our falls, and lesser and more pardonable miscarriages; such as, in the Old Testament, are called *the spots of God's children*. For thus we read, Deut. xxxii. 5. *They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children*; 'That is, says Ainsworth on the place, 'not such a spot or blemish, as is in the sons of God 'through infirmity, whereto all are subject; but such 'as is in a perversè and crooked generation, that will 'not be reclaimed from their vices.' So that it seems even the children of God, such as he owns for his sons and daughters, are not without their spots, their slips and failures; but all men are sinners in some respect, and even such, who in our Saviour's phrase, (u) *need no repentance*. Sins of infirmity none can escape, not even those who are most circumspect in all respects, and the most careful that can be to abstain from all others. It was the peculiar privilege of our blessed Lord, when he assumed our nature, that he *was in all points tempted like as we are*, yet without sin. But no mere son of Adam may pretend to the same exemption, this being a pure effect of the conjunction of the divine with the human nature. But then, for our encouragement, tho' we cannot live without these frailties, our comfort is, that there is a remedy offered for them, through the mediation of our Saviour and Redeemer. (x) *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and he is a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but*

(t) James iii. 2.

(u) Luke xv. 7.

(x) 1 John ii. 2.

for

for the sins of the whole world. And if for all our sins, then more especially for such as are committed through inadvertence, and weakness, and because we cannot help it: as is also implied in the fore-cited words, *They are not the spots of God's children.* For if such remain *God's children*, notwithstanding these *spots*, then must it follow, that their *spots* are forgiven them, and so do not at all endanger their everlasting welfare. In a word, our God is, as I said, a gracious God, and merciful; and will favourably accept of such an obedience, as he knows us able to perform. Nor ought any to distrust his kindness, only because they have not done that, which was impossible for them to do, and will be so, whilst they are men, and not angels, and are militant here on earth, and not triumphant in Heaven. The natural consequence of which doctrine is, that our sins of infirmity shall most certainly be forgiven upon a general repentance; and so the good Christian has no reason to doubt of his salvation upon their account.

Euseb. Thus you have fully proved the little reason there is, for any of us to be in fears upon the account of our sins of infirmity. But you have not yet told us, how to distinguish these sins from such as are wilful and damnable; which is a point of great consequence, and the clearing whereof will tend very much to the satisfaction of the mind; and without some knowledge whereof, the good man will not be able to pass a true judgment upon himself.

Theod. This is a question too nice to be easily resolved; and a thorough discussion whereof would take up more time, than can be allowed for it at present. Wherefore I shall not pretend to give you so full an answer to it, as you may expect; but only to present you with some few observations, which I hope will, give some light into it, and in some measure satisfy your desire. And here I must plainly own, that it is absolutely

absolutely impossible to furnish you with a complete catalogue of sins of infirmity, whereby for each one to distinguish which sins are such, and which not; and for a very good reason, because the same acts which in some men are the effects of weakness, and are pure involuntary miscarriages, may be wilful in others; and even in the same persons too, at other times, and in other circumstances. At one time, and under one sort of temptation, they may be less able to withstand them, than at another. And sometimes, again, they may be less watchful against them, or at least, against the temptations that lead to them; and so they may become in some degree wilful, though not deliberately and resolutely designed. And if what is a sin of surreption and surprize at one time, may become a wilful transgression at another, in the same person, it is easy to suppose, that it may be much more so in different persons. One man is not so cholerick naturally as another; and so that may be an inexcusable excess of passion in him, which yet is pardonable in another, who cannot thoroughly master these unruly motions in himself, tho' he ever so heartily desire and endeavour it. Another is of a timorous constitution, easily affrighted by any sudden surprize; and so is sometimes put upon doing inconsiderately, what he ought not, and what he would have been sure not to have done, if he had been master of his own thoughts and designs, and had time to weigh what he was venturing upon. Which makes his case very different from theirs, who have more power over themselves, and a more undaunted spirit, and greater presence of mind, and so have their thoughts at command, and can suddenly recollect with themselves, what is to be done in such an exigence, and how apparently they must offend God, and take the ready way to ruin themselves, if they act otherwise.

The

(y) The soldiers in *Julian's* army, who were induc'd to offer sacrifice, under the mistaken notion of paying an usual reverence to their sovereign, before whom they did it, soon declared such an abhorrence of all idolatry, and of themselves, because of it, that every one might see this was an involuntary crime in them; which yet had it been done considerately, and upon due information, would have entered them in the number of apostates from Christianity, as themselves openly acknowledged, as soon as they were made sensible of what they had been doing. And their guilt was nothing like that of their companions, who did the same thing knowingly, and for (z) *the sake of what they were like to get by it*. And divers other like cases there are, where the same action is sometimes an involuntary, and at other times a voluntary sin, and whose guilt therefore varies accordingly.

Anchith. Here you leave a man at great uncertainty; and take a ready way, instead of satisfying, to increase his doubts and fears.

Theod. I think I cannot be said to leave the man at great uncertainty; but at some I do, and inevitably must leave him. Because, as I said, there is no certain distinction betwixt these sins, that will hold in all cases, so as that it can be said, Such and such sins are, and will be, sins of weakness, and all other chosen and wilful sins. However, to make the difference between them as evident as I can, I think, *first*, That wandering thoughts, and heaviness in our devotions, tho', when indulg'd, they are certainly wilful sins, yet when we strive against them all we can, arming ourselves against them by such meditations beforehand as may seem most likely to prevent them, and in the act of

(y) Προσχήματι νόμῳ καὶ ἀρχαιοτήτι, ἔδ' εἰς τὸν ἑλᾶσον ὁ ἡμέραν.
Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 17.

Μικρῶ ὡρὶ καὶ χρυσίῳ, καὶ διὰ κνίσσης ὀλίγης ἐπιπλον, ἔδ' τῆς εἰαυτῶν σφαγῆν
εἰδότες οἱ πλείους. Greg. Naz. Στήλι. α.

(z) Τῷ φαινομένῳ κέρδει διλεαθείης. Sozom. ubi supra.

worship applying ourselves to get our minds into the most pious and serious posture we are able, studying to confine our thoughts purely to the business we are about, and to exert our utmost fervour and devotion; I think, I say, in this case, our coldness and wandrings cannot possibly be reckoned more, than the natural effects of weakness and infirmity. *Secondly*, The same I say of carnal and atheistical, or any sort of vicious fancies or desires injected into the mind, and which could not be foreseen or prevented. If these be cherished and meet with encouragement there, they thereby become our own, and must be looked upon as wilful sins: but, had they been immediately rejected, with detestation and abhorrence, they had been either sins of weakness, or possibly no sins at all, because not properly our own, but such temptations rather as our adversary had contrived to assault us with. *Thirdly*, To these also may be added sins of pure and unaffected ignorance, when we have used the best means we could for our information, but do not yet see the evil and mischief of them, nor know them to have been forbidden us. *Fourthly*, And such likewise I take strong and almost invincible prejudices to be, when a man unfeignedly sets himself to make an impartial judgment of any matter in debate; but, after all his heartiest endeavours to satisfy himself, has not yet been able to conquer the erroneous notion he had before conceived of it, and which perhaps he sucked in with his mother's milk; so that it has ever since grown up with him, and by this means has got such a powerful ascendant over him, that it occasions wrong conceptions in him, and so leads him into unseen errors of practice, as well as of judgment. *Fifthly*, Of this sort also I take all sins of mere surprise and inadvertency to be, when a man, beyond the intent of his heart, is overtaken by a temptation before he is aware of it; and so, not having time to consider, can hardly be said in any sense to have consented to what he did; when the suddenness of the assault allows him not

to represent to himself those mischiefs of it, and arguments against it, which could hardly have failed of deterring him from the least thoughts of giving way to it; through the want whereof it is, that the temptation becomes too powerful for him. In this case he is like a man that is unexpectedly seized and bound by an enemy, or a robber, against whom he could have defended himself, if he had had warning time enough to draw his sword, or take out his pistol; or like one half asleep, who inconsiderately does what he would by no means have suffered himself to do at another time, when perfectly awake, and master of himself. Such are sudden immoderate acts of passion, together with the lighter effects and consequences of them, which seem not to proceed so properly from the actor himself, as from the surprize he acts in; I mean, supposing him to be one that earnestly studies to govern his passions according to the rules of reason and religion, and is only now-and-then hurried away by them against his will. *Sixthly*, Such again I account all unavoidable imperfections in the performance of our duty; not only our wandering and unseasonable thoughts in our devotions, which I mentioned before, but moreover our want of due gratitude to God for all his mercies, of true humiliation for our sins, of love to God, of trust in his good Providence, and the like. When we have these virtues planted in our souls, and do study to cultivate and improve them to the best of our abilities, but cannot do it to that degree we earnestly desire we could, we may however comfort ourselves with this consideration, that these and such-like defects and imperfections, if they be to be inserted in the catalogue of our sins, must yet be put amongst those that are involuntary; since we find by sad and long experience, that we are not able to get above them, tho' we ever so heartily and watchfully endeavour it. *Lastly*, To these I only subjoin sins of forgetfulness; when a man fully resolves to perform such a duty at
such

such a time, or in such a place; and has really convenience of doing it; but in the mean while some unusual accident or occasion intervening diverts his mind, and puts this design quite out of his thoughts for the present, so that he remembers nothing of it till it is too late. This is a fault of the head, not of the heart or will; and will no doubt be interpreted by Almighty God, as the effect of our mortal feeble constitution; and will therefore have an answerable allowance made for it. These are the most remarkable sins of infirmity; but I cannot say they are all, nor that they are always such, because the nature of them may be much altered by circumstances; and if at any time indulged, they may by this means become highly criminal, wilful, and provoking sins. And now on the contrary, under the notion of wilful sins, I presume, these at least are deservedly to be concluded, and to be lamented and bewailed as such: 1. *All habitual sins*, which tho' by the power of custom they are grown familiar, and have acquired a great measure of strength, and so are hard to be overcome, yet are they highly aggravated by the frequent repetition of them; and, unless duly repented of, must inevitably end in everlasting destruction. Where, by habitual sins, I do not mean such defects and weaknesses as I mentioned before, which cleave fast to us, and are not to be shaken off, by all the diligence we can use to get rid of them; but such irregular, unchristian practices as any proceed in, without heartily striving against them, or trying the means prescribed in order to a conquest over them. No sin is a sin of infirmity, that a man does not hate, and which he does not in good earnest set himself to oppose, and use his hearty endeavour to free himself from it. 2. *All known and deliberate sins*. It argues a strange depravity of mind, when sinners see the evil they are about to commit, and have time to weigh both the guilt and danger of it, and yet resolve not to be deterred from it. How small soever the sin may be in other respects,
this

this deliberate choice of it implies a great degree of guilt, and most certainly leaves no room to question whether it be wilful or not. 3. *All sins not accompanied with an unfeigned repentance, as soon as they are taken notice of.* Whenever a good man falls into an involuntary offence against God, he is no sooner made sensible of his fault, but he is presently grieved for it, his soul is full of trouble, and he can have no rest, till he has humbled himself for it, and endeavoured, in the most submissive manner, to obtain its pardon. (a) *Aristotle* has noted it long ago, as a mark of an involuntary lapse, that it is attended with sorrow and repentance. And the observation holds good, as well on the contrary, and always will, that that action can have no disagreement with the will, that the actor can reflect upon with satisfaction, or even with indifference, and an unconcernedness for it. For tho' a confession of sin, and sorrow for it, is no infallible evidence of a true repentance, until accompanied with amendment; yet must it be admitted, on the other hand, that a sin not attended with sorrow, and self-abasement in the sight of God, upon the discovery of it, has so far the approbation of the mind, that the offender can have no real aversion to it. And it must therefore be owned for truth, that whosoever can reflect upon a sin thus committed, without a hearty regret, and remorse of conscience, for having committed it, is no longer to be looked upon as an enemy to it. And by consequence, whether he consider it before, or not, his acquiescence in it afterwards is a sufficient proof, that it is to be reckoned amongst his allowed and wilful sins. 4. *Such sins whereto we knowingly expose ourselves.* It is not enough, that I resolve against my sins, but I must resolve too against the known occasions of them. For so long as I am content to put myself in the way of these, how firm soever my resolutions be, it is odds but I shall soon be overcome.

(a) *Αχέσιον δὲ τὸ ἐπὶ λυπὸν καὶ ἐν μεταμέλειᾳ.* Ad Nicom. l. 3. c. 1.

For instance: Let the drunkard ever so seriously resolve against intemperance, or the lustful person against his unlawful embraces, yet unless the one take care to withdraw from his wonted ill companions, and the other avoid the society of lewd women, they will be in apparent danger of returning to their former vicious courses, or at least of falling into some of those acts of wickedness they had been so long accustomed to. And whenever they do so, how far soever they had been from designing it, yet because they had foolishly laid the snare for betraying themselves into such a fall, they are accordingly to reckon it amongst their wilful sins. So when one in a drunken fit commits an act of adultery, of robbery, or of murder, which he would have abhorred the thoughts of, had he been sober, and in his right senses; tho' his drunkenness was the real cause of his wickedness, yet he is by no means to look upon it as a sin of weakness; because his drunkenness, which occasioned it, was not so. Had he acted the same part in a fit of distraction, his distemper would have made it a sin of infirmity; because his want of a right understanding, which was the only cause of his miscarriage, being an involuntary misfortune, and what he could no way avoid, he is not to be condemned, but pitied rather, for all the natural ill effects of that. But the case is very different in the instance before us. For drunkenness being a wilful sin, which the sinner might and ought to have abstained from, and which he had not fallen into but through his own fault, he is therefore answerable for all the consequences of it, and this amongst the rest. And so it is in other like cases. The free choice of the sinner, when in a capacity of making it, being the cause of the cause, is construed likewise to be the cause of its effect, and so makes that a wilful sin, which otherwise would not have been so. 5. *All sins committed against the dictates and admonitions of conscience, cautioning to abstain from them.* Some, as has been already

ready observed, lay it down as mark of a regenerate person, that he sins with reluctance; and, as they are pleased to apply St. Paul's words, *(b) what he would, he does not; and what he hates, that he does.* Yet of such an one I may much more truly say, notwithstanding his pretences to religion and the fear of God, as the Apostle speaks in the verse immediately foregoing, that he is *yet carnal, sold under sin.* For I would desire any one to tell me, what surer sign there can be of a corrupt mind, than that when a man sees the evil of sin, and has time to weigh and consider it, and finds his conscience start and recoil at it, and warn him against it, as he loves either God, or his own soul; what surer sign, I say, there can be of a corrupt mind, than for a man to break through all these admonitions and reproofs, in order to the gratification of his lusts or passions. If this is not a proof, that his wickedness is wilful and chosen, it is impossible to tell what is.

Euseb. What you affirm is so reasonable, that I can see no cause to question the truth of it.

Anchitb. No doubt it is. Be pleased therefore to proceed.

Theod. With your leave then I shall observe to you, that though I cannot point to a distinction, between sins of weakness and wilfulness, that shall clearly and certainly hold in all cases; nevertheless, I have so far endeavoured to characterize each of them, as that I hope an honest-minded man may, by the help of what has been said, be able to form a tolerable judgment, to whether sort his sins belong: which is all I can pretend to, in a point, wherein it is impossible to have any stated general rule, that shall serve for all emergencies, and suit with all cases. And, for the farther knowledge of them, every one must be left to his own prudence, when he has first seriously examined and tried his doings by these directions, and made an impartial inquiry, how much of wilfulness, or of weakness, surprize or ignorance, is in

(b) Rom. vii. 15.

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them. And I beseech Almighty God to guide us all aright, that none of us ever impose upon himself, in a matter of such everlasting importance to him.

Euseb. But pray, *Theodorus*, now we are in, what do you say to sins of omission? Under whether of these heads do you place them?

Theod. Under both. I say of these, as I do of those of commission, that they belong certainly and universally to neither; but are sometimes to be ascribed to the one, and sometimes to the other, accordingly as there is more or less of the will in them. Some omissions proceed from ignorance, or inconsideration, or forgetfulness; and are pardonable upon this account. Others are known, deliberate, and chosen; which makes a vast difference in their guilt, and shews plainly, that they are wilful, and to be accounted for as such. And so we find, in the description our Saviour gives us, of the proceedings of the last day, that judgment will pass upon the uncharitable, for *not having fed the hungry, and clothed the naked*, and done other offices of kindness to the distressed and indigent. They are not charged with having robbed, or cheated, or oppressed and ruined their neighbours, but only with not relieving them in their streights, and with-holding that assistance which they might, and ought to have afforded them. Yet for this our blessed Lord will say to them, at the great day, *(c) Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Whence it is obvious to observe, the excessive danger that may arise even from these omissions, when indulg'd; inasmuch as a sinner may be everlastingly condemn'd for these, as well as for his sins of commission; and that therefore we must not make too light of omissions of our duty, because though they are frequently to be accounted amongst our sins of infirmity, yet when wilful and indulged, they are highly dangerous and destructive.

(c) Matth. xxv. 41, &c.

Euseb.

Euseb. There is one question more I would gladly propose, if it were not for fear of being over-troublesome.

Theod. Never fear that, good *Eusebius*.

Euseb. What is to be thought of the many defects, that usually attend our best services? Whether are these to be reckon'd to our weak, or our wilful sins?

Theod. I thought this had been sufficiently evident, from what has been said already. But since you seem of another opinion, I will tell you that they are denominated either wilful, or not, according as they depend, more or less, upon our consent to, or endeavours against them. If they be what, when we have done our best, we can no way prevent, then they are doubtless infirmities only. But if we allow ourselves in them, they hereupon change their nature, and are, thenceforward, to be looked upon as wilful sins. For instance, in prayer to God; when I have compos'd myself with all the devotion and reverence I can, to represent my wants before him, studying, by all the ways in my power, to abstract my thoughts from all earthly, or carnal, or vain objects, or whatever is foreign to the business I am upon, and to send them up in a holy fervor towards Heaven; if they however flag, and wander, do what I can to the contrary, these are, questionless, sins of infirmity. But if I come to worship God in a careless and indifferent manner, not seeking to attend to my petitions, but freely entertaining the mind with other sort of objects, that serve only to divert it from what I come about, I see not how they can then avoid the imputation of becoming my own voluntary iniquities, and wilful sins. Or again, if, when I appear thus in God's presence, I wish, indeed, my thoughts were all along fix'd upon the addressees I am making before him, but do not mind to keep them in order, nor try to recal them so soon as I perceive them to have gone astray, nor am troubled at their roving after other matters; here, likewise, it will be hard to say, that

these are sins of pure infirmity, and have not something of the will in them. In the first of these cases, there is just cause of sorrow and self-abasement, and to implore God's mercy, in the pardon of my weakness, and inability to serve him as I ought. But the other two call for an amendment, and subsequent care to shew myself more attentive and devout, before I can hope my prayers will be heard, or these miscarriages in them will be forgiven me. Or, farther, if we keep our thoughts intent upon God, and good things, but not upon the matter of our present address, nor be so fervent in it as we might be; here, likewise, the fault is our own. Or, again, if we profess to love God, but do it not with the affection that we ought; this, so far as it is a natural defect, and what we are sorry for, but can no way contrive to remedy, is our unhappiness, rather than our sin. Not so, if I voluntarily set my mind upon other objects, preferring the creature, of whatever kind, before the Creator, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*. So when a man is truly sorry for his sins, though not in such a measure as they deserve, and withal is truly grieved, that he is not more sorry for them; this makes it plain, that the defect of such sorrow is involuntary, and is accordingly to be lamented only as an unavoidable infirmity. Insomuch that, as the honourable Mr. Boyle delivers this, as a good sign of a true unfeigned love of God, *(d) That that man loves God as much as he ought, who, loving him as much as he can, strives to repair the deplored imperfection of that love, with an extreme regret, to find his love no greater; and that such a sublimity of love will best intitle you to the consolation accruing from that memorable passage of (e) St. John, where he says, That God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;* so I take it to be no less true here, that the only sure evidence of a right sorrow for your sins, is to be heartily sorry both for having committed them, and

(d) Seraphick Love, p. 29, 30.

(e) 1 John iv. 16.

for the want of a deeper sorrow for them. But whatever more of sorrow is wanting, this being merely the effect of our constitution, and not any voluntary choice; it needs not be doubted but God, who is infinitely good, and who knows all our defects and weaknesses, will never impute to our condemnation, what he sees thus utterly out of our power.

Euseb. Is there any thing farther you would advise, in order to a right judgment of ourselves?

Theod. Yes. In order to the more successful application of the foregoing rules, I would advise to have before you some such catalogue of the several branches of our duty, and the violations of it, as may help you the more readily to call to mind what your sins have been, that you are now to repent of; such as you have in Archbishop *Laud's* Daily Office of a Christian; the Confession of Sins in Bishop *Andrews's* Manual of Directions for the Sick; Bishop *Downham's* Abstract of Duties commanded, and Sins forbidden, in the Law of God; towards the latter end of the *Whole Duty of Man*; and at the end of the *Common-Prayer the best Companion*; or of Mr. *Nelson's* excellent Companion for the Feasts and Fasts of the Church; or in Bishop *Taylor's* Holy Dying, chap. IV. *sect.* 8. or Mr. *Kettlewell's* Trial of the Soul, in his Companion to the Penitent; or more largely, in the second book of his Measures of Christian Obedience; in Mr. *Seller's* Office for Good-Friday, in his Good Man's Preparation for a happy receiving of the blessed Sacrament; or other treatises of devotion, and, particularly, in relation to the Lord's supper. Such a method will hardly fail of putting you in mind of the several sorts of sins, whereinto you may, at any time, have fallen; or, at least, of the grosser and more offensive of them. And then, if you duly consider which of them were of weakness, which of wilfulness, which involuntary, and which freely chosen; which you have repented of and forsaken, and which still retain an interest in you; it will be no difficult matter to make a probable judgment,

ment, perhaps, a certain one, whether you be a son of God, and like to be for ever happy; or a child of wrath and perdition. But then you must be sure to deal fairly and candidly with yourself, judging by what you really find yourself chargeable with; neither lessening nor excusing your sins; nor, on the other hand, being too severe upon yourself, for such sins as it was not in your power to avoid.

Euseb. There is little danger of peoples being over-severe to themselves, so as undeservedly to condemn themselves. I wish they would not more readily seek to excuse themselves from such guilt, which, like the poison'd shirt to *Hercules*, sticks so close to them, that they know not how to get rid of it.

Theod. It is true, men are readiest to fail on this side, in favouring themselves beyond what Almighty God will think reasonable at the last day: though I must confess, there are some few well-meaning persons, who are apt to err on the other hand, by concluding themselves in a worse condition, than they have reason for; and so are tempted to despair of pardon, when any other man would take their case to be very safe. Both these extremes are carefully to be avoided, as we would neither die in an impenitent state; nor deprive ourselves of that comfort, which would naturally arise from a well-grounded sense of God's favour; and disturb our minds with unnecessary fears and jealousies, and unfit ourselves for serving God, as we might otherwise have done; not to add farther, as we would not be tempted to despair of his mercy, and thereby provoke him to withdraw it from us.

Euseb. When is it you would have a man thus examine himself?

Theod. He is, above all times, especially concern'd to do it when he comes to be sick, and death looks him in the face, and gives him warning speedily to make up his accounts, lest it be too late the next day. But this should be only in order to a balance of them.

For

For he ought by no means to defer this work till his latter end, but to be constant in it throughout the course of his whole life. In his first beginning his repentance, or so soon as he comes to years of discretion and understanding, so as to be capable of making a judgment of himself, he must diligently and impartially review his life past, and seriously consider the sins he has been guilty of, so far as he can recollect them, together with their several aggravations; to humble himself for them, and to sue to God for pardon thro' Christ, and grace to walk more holy for the future; to resolve against the repetition of them; and to arm himself against those temptations whereby he has been drawn into them; to observe how he may best guard himself against them; and to confirm his purposes of amendment, and a better obedience, for the remaining part of his life. And besides, he is farther to remember, that he must not cease here; but, though he come to ever so perfect a discovery of himself, he must be mindful always after, to make a frequent inspection into his *conversation*, to see that it is such as becomes the gospel of Christ, to lament and bewail what farther transgressions he can discover in his future conduct, and to renew his former purposes of amendment.

Euseb. How oft do you think it necessary for a good Christian to examine himself as you prescribe?

Theod. The sick man must do it, as his distemper allows him time and ability. But, as to others, this examination is in a particular manner recommended by such as have written of the Lord's supper, and the due celebration of it, as necessary in order to a worthy attendance upon that sacred ordinance, and therefore always to be used before our approaches to it; and more particularly upon account of those words of the apostle St. Paul; (f) *Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* And many divines have imprudently pressed this ad-

(f) 1 Cor. xi. 28.

vice so far, that divers very good, and truly devoted Christians, chuse rather to absent themselves, when graciously invited to that heavenly banquet, than appear there without such a previous examination, when they have not time for it. Which, tho' it be a great error in them, it being much better to serve our Lord as well as our present circumstances will admit of, than not do it at all; yet nothing can be more proper and becoming, than such a serious examination upon every notice timely given of a sacrament, together with such a mixture of preparatory devotion, as may tend to raise the most holy affections in the soul, may obtain the pardon of its sins, and so may qualify the person, worthily to commemorate our blessed Saviour's infinite love in dying for us. But then besides these, and other the like more solemn times for self-examination, he that would live agreeably to his most holy profession, will find it necessary for him to be frequently exercised in the consideration of his (g) *own ways*; to call them often to remembrance, as the Psalmist did, as highly useful in order to the *turning his feet to God's testimonies*. And, if my judgment signify any thing in the case, I should direct, exhort, intreat, and beseech him, to pass no day without it; that every night, before he compose himself to sleep, he would (b) *commune with his heart upon his bed, and be still*; or rather, before he lays him down, would take a little time, to look back upon the several occurrences of the day past, to see how faithfully he had discharged his duty, and would put the author of the Golden Verses questions to himself,

Πῇ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι θεὸν ἐκ ἐτελέθην;

And see *what good he has done that day*; *what duty he has ventured to omit*; *whether he has indulged any vice*; and in short, how he has demeaned himself in all respects. This St. Chrysostom recommends, from those words of the Psalmist, (i) *Commune with yourselves in your chamber, and be still*; directing that *after supper,*

(g) Psalm cxix. 59. (b) Ibid. iv. 4. (i) ver. 5.

before

before a man betake himself to his rest, when he is preparing for his bed, and has none with him, but all is still and quiet about him, he erect a tribunal in his own conscience, and bring himself to a trial, what evil he has contrived the day past, what frauds he has committed, what neighbour he has supplanted, what corrupt inclinations he has gratified, and to pass judgment upon himself accordingly. And would each Christian constantly follow this method, he would quickly become well acquainted with himself; would make his repentance the perfecter, and more particular; would ease his mind of the heavy burden of past sins; would soon have got over the difficulty of his inquiry, and reduc'd it into a little compass; would find his love to sin turn'd to hatred of it; would soften his hard heart, and awaken his drowsy conscience; would prevent his miscarriages becoming habitual; and would have a great deal the less to do, whenever he comes to die. In a word, this were the way to make our work easy, our lives comfortable, and our end glorious. Nor will this be any troublesome business, to those who have been acquainted with it for a while. It must cost some time and pains at first, till it is grown familiar to them, and they know to what failings they are most liable, and are most obliged to inquire after. But thenceforwards they will be readier for it, and so it will take up no long time for the dispatch of it. A quarter of an hour, or, perhaps, but half so much, every night; which can be no great burden to any one, to set aside ordinarily for such reflection. And yet, whosoever well employs that space constantly to this purpose, will soon experience the wonderful advantage of it, in order to the mortification of his lusts and passions, and, hereby, to his growth in grace, and a happy preparation for a blessed eternity.

Euseb. Really, *Theodorus*, what you say seems so highly reasonable, that I begin to wish all that call themselves Christians, would constantly put it in practice. And, for my own part, I will begin, by the
grace

grace of God, this night; and, I hope, I shall continue in the daily observance of it, as long as I live.

Theod. I beseech you do; and you will soon find the good effect of it: and I heartily wish you had begun it sooner.

Euseb. I will be sure to try.

Theod. Pray do; and you will heartily thank me for my advice. And now I am upon this subject, give me leave to prescribe another practice; which, though no part of that examination I have been treating of, is yet so highly useful, and so nearly allied to the advice now given, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. It is this; that men of business in the world would allow themselves a little time, every morning, to think beforehand, what company they are like to meet with that day, what undertakings to be engaged in, what difficulties of any sort to struggle with, and what temptations they may probably have to encounter upon any of these accounts; that they may the better provide against them, may be diligently upon their guard, when the time comes, and so may preserve their integrity in the midst of them. Such a short preconsideration in the morning, and a recollection again at night, no one can make trial of, but he will quickly be convinc'd of the admirable expedience and usefulness of them.

Euseb. I like your prescriptions so well, that I am resolv'd to try both of them. And God grant I may do it effectually!

Anchitb. I have been a watchful hearer all this time, and have very carefully attended to all your discourse; and, I hope, I both understand aright, and retain the meaning of the several excellent rules you have laid down, whereby to make a true judgment of the state of our souls, and the disposition we are in for another life. But that I may be sure I do not mistake your meaning, if you please to give me leave, I will briefly recapitulate what I take to be intended

intended by them, and how I may observe them, so as to be benefited by them.

Theod. A very seasonable motion! and to which I must necessarily consent.

Anchith. Then I will begin. And I beg you will please to set me right, if I either forget, or mistake.

Theod. I will be sure to do it.

Anchith. Having first removed the false grounds of satisfaction, by which people have been directed to impose upon themselves, and shewn the weakness and insufficiency of them; you next proceed to prescribe such proper directions, as, if rightly pursued, may be a ready means of discovering each one to himself. To which end, you lay down this as an undoubted fundamental principle, and which every one is to receive as such; That there is no hope of salvation for him who allows himself in any wilful sin. And, no doubt, very truly, since the Holy Scripture so totally condemns it; both declaring (k) *the wages of it to be death*; and moreover affirming, that (l) *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*; whereby is implied, that such an one shall as surely be proceeded against as a sinner, as he whose transgressions are far more numerous. Hence that seems a natural inference, which you observ'd in the next place, that every wilful relapse into sin returns a man back into his former miserable state, till he shall have arisen out of it by a new repentance. Every wilful relapse, I say; for the case you have shewn to be quite otherwise with our involuntary offences; that those will be pardoned upon a general repentance, and so our salvation is not endanger'd by them. You have taught us, also, how to distinguish betwixt sins of weakness, and wilfulness. You have instructed us, likewise, how to judge of our sins of omission, as belonging to either of these classes; according as they are indulged or not. As also is the case of our many defects and

(k) Rom. vi. 23.

(l) James ii. 10.

imperfections in the service of God ; and, in order to a salutary application of the whole to our advantage, have recommended a frequent, serious, and penitent examination of ourselves, to each one's constant practice ; and noted the proper times for it.

Theod. You say right. This is the sum of what I have been discoursing more at large. And if either of you have any objection to make to it, I am ready to explain myself to your farther satisfaction.

Euseb. I see no cause for any objection. But if you will give me leave, I will propose an inference from the whole, which, I think, may reduce all to one word.

Theod. That is easily done. And I know beforehand, the word you mean, is *sincerity*.

Euseb. It is so. For I think the result of all is this ; that a sincere endeavour to learn the will of God, and do it, so as in nothing knowingly to offend him, is the only evidence of our being qualified for a future state of happiness. He that has this, shall not fail of being accepted with God ; and he that has it not, is sure not to be accepted by him.

Theod. Most certainly. For God can neither love those that are not hearty in his service, nor reject those that are. It is (*m*) *the heart* he calls for. And wheresoever this is right before him, we may safely depend upon his favour. (*n*) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* ; which no wicked man can do. The sinner must not hope for such a privilege, as is not to be attain'd to without (*o*) *holiness*. But since our Saviour has taught us, that the *pure in heart* have a right to it ; this is an evident proof, that such purity of heart is the holiness that capacitates for this blessedness. Thus the wise man invites to have a singular regard to the motions of the heart ; and gives this reason for it, that our eternal salvation has a peculiar dependence upon them. (*p*) *Hear, my son,*

(*m*) Prov. xxiii. 26.
(*p*) Prov. xxiii. 19.

(*n*) Matth. v. 8.

(*o*) Heb. xii. 14.

and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way; (q) Keeping thine heart with all diligence, (r) before, or above, all keeping; that is, with all the care that may be, to preserve it upright before God; for out of it are the issues of life; and according as this is well or ill disposed, such is thy behaviour like to be outwardly, and such thy state to all eternity. So Almighty God commands the Jews to (s) circumcise the foreskin of their hearts; (t) to cut off and cast away their naughty affections, and be no more stiff-necked, as he had often complained they were. And by the mouth of the prophet *Jeremiab*, he threatens to punish them for the wickedness of their hearts, as surely as he would the *Edomites*, or *Moabites*, or any other of their neighbours, for their uncircumcision: (u) Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised, with the uncircumcised; *Egypt*, and *Judab*, and *Edom*, and the children of *Ammon*, and *Moab*, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness; for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of *Israel* are uncircumcised in heart, Here the Jews, you see, are ranked amongst the uncircumcised, because they were such in heart, as the others were in the flesh; they wanted that inward circumcision, without which the outward impression made in the flesh is of no worth in God's account. And, on the contrary, (x) *Hezekiab* is commended, and prospered, because whatsoever he did in God's service, he did it with all his heart. And, in the New Testament, says our Saviour to the pharisees, (y) Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth the heart. (z) And divers other places there are, where the heart is declared to be what God respects; so that, if this be not devoted to his honour,

(q) Prov. iv. 23. (r) מבל-משמר (s) Deut. x. 16. (t) Bishop Patrick upon the place. (u) Jerem. ix. 25, 26. (x) 2 Chron. xxxi. 21. (y) Luke xvi. 15. (z) 1 Sam. vii. 3. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. and xxix. 17. and 2 Chron. xxv. 2. Psalm xxiv. 4. and ii. 6. and lxvi. 18. and lxxiii. 1. Prov. xxi. 2. Rom. ii. 29. and viii. 7. Ephes. vi. 5. 1. Tim. i. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 15.

all

all the service we can pay him, is like to stand us in little stead. And, on the other hand, if this be upright and clean, and we are inwardly bent upon his service, we shall not need to despond, and to torment ourselves for such less, involuntary miscarriages, as we find it out of our power totally to prevent.

Euseb. But how shall I know whether my heart be such, as will approve itself before God?

Theod. You may know it by these marks; which I shall very briefly mention, and so leave them to your own consideration, to make what farther improvement you can of them: 1. If the certain tenor and general course of your life be holy. This is so necessary from the constant doctrine of the Gospel, declaring all sin to be of a deadly nature, and that it is, in all respects, diametrically opposite to that will of God; that whosoever pretends to please God can never give way to it, without a great degree of hypocrisy and insincerity. 2. If your care to please God be founded upon truly religious principles and motives. A man may do many good things, and yet be far from being a good man, if they be done to a wrong end, or for some unworthy sinister design. If he be temperate, for his health's sake only; or charitable, out of ostentation, and vain-glory; or fair in his dealings, for the preservation of his credit and reputation; or patient of affronts, out of pure cowardise; or abstemious, out of covetousness; or observant of his times and devotion, out of pure custom, and because he sees others do it; or for the carrying on some worldly interest; or because his time lies upon his hands, and he knows not how otherwise to employ himself; such an one miserably deceives himself, if he thinks Almighty God will look upon this as an acceptable service, whilst he is conscious to himself, that he did it not for his Maker's honour, but for his own advantage. This shews him to be intent upon serving not God, but himself; and that all his good deeds are done, either to bad pur-

poses,

poses, or, at least, to such as are unworthy of his most holy religion; and so can neither recommend him to Almighty God now, nor make him happy for ever hereafter. 3. If you be as studious to serve God, and as afraid of offending him in private, as in publick; in bad company, as in good; and when you are like to suffer, as when you hope to get by it. A true Christian is uniform in his obedience, at all times, and in all places, studying to approve himself, what he professes to be; and never acting contrary to his duty, with whatsoever impunity he may do it in this world, or how little notice soever may be taken of it. His business is not to please men, but God, whose eye he knows is most assuredly upon him, who sees into the closest corner of the heart, and to whom he must be accountable at the last day. And whosoever he be that takes a contrary course, needs no other argument to convince him of his insincerity, than that his practice is not to be reconcil'd to his profession. A true fear of God overawes a man at all times, and in all places and estates; as well when it is against his temporal interest, as when on its side; and will have the same influence in the secret chambers, as in the open streets; and will make a man as unwilling to offend, where no other eye but that of the Almighty can see it, as in the face of the greatest assembly. And whosoever finds himself thus careful of his duty, may justly look upon it, as an undeniable token of his sincerity. 4. If such your care to please God be without a reserve, for any beloved lust, or inclination. A truly good man owns himself obliged to an universal obedience to the divine commandments of the one table, as well as of the other; and when contradictory to his own natural temper, and desires, no less than when most agreeable thereto. And by an inquiry into his conversation, and the disposition of his mind in this respect, a man may find whether the Divine Will, or his own, be the more prevailing principle in him; whether he is more concerned

concerned to please God, or himself; and, in a word, whether he be so sincere and hearty in the performance of his duty, as he ought, and professes to be.

5. If you be watchful against lesser sins, as well as against those of a grosser and fouler nature. It is not enough, that we have an abhorrence of such crying iniquities, as none but a very hardened sinner will dare to venture upon. But a good Christian, and an unfeigned follower of our blessed Lord, will be continually upon his guard against all temptations to whatever deserves the name of sin. He knows, that every wilful transgression of his duty is a high affront offered to the great and good God, whom he is bound to fear above all things; and dares not venture upon it for all the world, how light a matter soever others may make of it. Though divers, even of our wilful sins, are comparatively little, he knows assuredly, that none is really so in its own nature; and therefore makes it his business to keep from all sins, and even from such as are most common, and least condemned by the generality of men. And till a man is come to be thus watchful against *all appearances of evil*, I cannot see how he can satisfy himself of his sincerity in the service of God.

6. And *lastly*, If you be truly humbled upon every unforeseen failure in your duty, and thenceforward watchfully endeavour an amendment. I have already observed, that such a sorrow for sin committed, is not, of itself, any proof that a man is really a good man. But I may safely affirm it, on the other hand, as an undoubted truth, that he who can suffer himself to be betrayed into any sin, without being heartily concerned and troubled for it afterwards, is far from being what he ought to be. He must have little reverence for Almighty God, and little sense of duty to him, that can reflect upon his having disobeyed his laws, without being ashamed and troubled for it. But when a man is so sensible of his having done amiss, in deviating from his duty, that he heartily laments and bewails it; and not only

so,

so, but sets himself with all his might to walk more carefully for the future, this argues a right disposition of soul in him. This is the best he is capable of doing, towards making a reparation for what he has done amiss; and is a very good sign, that he is sincere in his profession. These, my friend, are the most obvious marks of a sincere desire to please God. And if these fruits appear in your conversation, you need not question, but the root from whence they spring is sound and good, and such as, through our blessed Saviour's mediation, will nourish you to eternal life.

Euseb. Really, *Theodorus*, you have given me such satisfaction, and set this great point in so clear a light, that I hope nothing farther need be desired, for letting a man into the true state of his soul; but only, that he carefully apply himself to make a right use of the method here prescribed for it: which I beseech Almighty God to give us all grace to do faithfully and impartially, and as in his sight, who knows us far better than we know ourselves, and whom we are sure we cannot deceive; though if we be not very careful and inquisitive, or make a judgement of ourselves otherwise than by the rules here laid down, we may deceive ourselves to our own destruction.

Anchitb. This discourse has come very seasonably for me, who am now upon the business of reviewing my life, and making my peace with God, *before I go hence, and be no more seen*: and whose great concern it is therefore to inquire narrowly into the state of my soul, that I depart not hence with a false peace, and ill-grounded hope, and so be made sadly to bewail the ill effects of my mistake to all eternity. I will therefore examine myself by these rules, that so I may see how the case stands betwixt God and my soul; and what assurance I can promise myself, that if I die now, as I am very like to do, I shall not be for ever miserable. And that I may do it as I ought, I humbly beg the assistance of my God to *open mine eyes,*

eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of his law, and may discover, and be truly penitent for, my manifold transgressions of it.

A Prayer for Direction in order to a right Judgment of one's Self.

O Lord God of hosts, who searchest the heart, and triest the reins, and observest all our ways, to bring us to a strict account for them, and to render to every man according to his works; to thee I fly for assistance and direction in this my languishing condition. Discover me clearly to myself, that I may see how vain and foolish, how careless and negligent, how disobedient and undutiful I have been, and may be deeply humbled for it. And where I have faithfully and heartily endeavoured to please thee, though with great weakness and imperfection, make me sensible of this too, that, through the merits of our blessed Saviour, I may enjoy the comfort of it. Teach me to pass a right judgment upon myself, that I may neither presume upon thy goodness, whilst I allow myself in any iniquity, nor despair of thy mercy and forgiveness, when I do not. Mortify and subdue the remainders of corruption in me. Increase and perfect all my graces, or whatsoever good inclinations thou seest in me: and take me not hence, O gracious Lord, till thou shalt have fitted me for the fruition of thine everlasting kingdom. Hear me, O Lord, and grant me this my most humble request, for the sake, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Theod. The good Lord hearken to you, and give you a gracious answer! And so I recommend you to the divine protection, hoping to wait upon you again to-morrow.

Anchith. A thousand thanks to you, good *Theodorus*, for all your kindness. I thank you also, *Eusebius*.

Euseb. I pray God be with you, and grant you a favourable night, after this long visit.

The End of the Fourth VISIT.

The

The Fifth VISIT.

The more immediate Preparation for Death.

Theoph. OUR friend *Eusebius* and I are come to see you, good *Anchitbanes*; *Timotheus* and *Philogeiton* designed also to accompany us; but business has fallen out cross, that they are forced to beg your excuse till to-morrow, when we are all to be here by a new appointment.

Euseb. They fully intended to have come with us, and were heartily troubled at their disappointment. But pray, *Anchitbanes*, how are you now?

Anchith. I thank God not very uneasy, either in body, or mind; but weaker and weaker; wearing away as you see. The good God of his mercy fit me for my great change, which seems to be approaching!

Theoph. I trust he has done it already, that you need not be solicitous upon that account.

Anchith. I hope it is done in a good measure; yet not so, but that I have great cause to pray to God to complete it. And it is a matter of that vast consequence to my soul, that I cannot be too careful about it: which makes me beg what farther assistance you can give in order to it.

Theoph. With all our hearts.

Anchith. I am very weak, and much spent, since you saw me last, and not like to continue any time in this world; and would be glad to improve the small remainder of my days, if at least I have any yet remaining, to the best purposes I can.

Theoph. What service is it we can do you?

Anchith. When you did me the favour, *Theophilus*, to visit me formerly, you promised to inform me how I might frame a right judgment of myself, so as to discern whether I be in the favour of God at present, and in the way to be saved hereafter: but *Theodorus*,

I thank him, has been at so much pains to teach me this, that I shall not now trouble you about it,

Theoph. What is it then you would desire?

Anchith. To be taught what duties are peculiarly incumbent upon one in my condition, that lies upon the bed of sickness, and every day expects his dissolution; as I now do.

Theoph. I know not how we can employ our time better, if your weakness will not make our discourse a disturbance to you.

Anchith. Assure yourselves, it will not. For though I am much spent as to my body, I thank God my understanding is still clear. And I hope I shall be able both to attend to, and practise what I shall learn from you.

Theoph. Do not think, *Anchithanes*, that we pretend to teach you, but only to refresh your memory, and bring to mind what you have let slip, during this want of your health.

Anchith. I shall not interrupt your good design, by returning your compliment; but do beg the favour of you to begin.

Theoph. You are then to look upon yourself, as possibly upon the brink of the grave, ready to launch into eternity, in as uncertain a condition as (a) *Damocles*, with his dagger hanging over his head, and threatening every moment to drop upon him, and dispatch him. Which thought calls upon you to muster up all your forces, and be as industrious as possibly you can, in making a good use of the few sands that yet remain in your glass. It is but a little time you can promise yourself to work in, the day being far spent, and *the night, wherein no man can work*, in all appearance, drawing on apace. There is none so weak, but God, if he see fit, can restore him: and we have known divers persons given over by the physician, and doubtless in as low a condition as yourself, that yet have recovered, and lived many years after. But this being what

(a) Cic. Tusc. Quæst. 5.

you have little reason to expect, you do very wisely in laying aside your concern for this world, and employing your thoughts wholly for the other. Your only business is now, to make what farther preparation you can, for a happy departure hence, and a blessed eternity when you are gone.

Anchith. And how must I do this?

Theoph. I believe by this time you find by experience, that it is no great matter a man can do, when reduc'd to your helpless circumstances. Yet what he can, must be done.

Anchith. Be pleas'd to give me your directions, and I will observe them according to my power.

Theoph. I should have begun, in the *first* place, with the first thing our Church recommends in her *rubrick* for the *visitation of the sick*; which is, *To send to the minister of the parish, to beg his assistance and prayers.* But, instead of pressing this upon you, I am rather to commend you for having already done it. And I presume you are satisfied by this time, you did well and wisely in it.

Anchith. I have owned it to you formerly, and have much more reason to do it, now that I have had more experience of the valuable blessing of so useful a help, at such a time as this: which is a benefit I owe to you *Theophilus*; and I return you hearty thanks for having first put me upon it.

Theoph. I was fully satisfied of the singular usefulness of such a guide, when you came within sight of eternity, and of such an intercessor for you to Heaven; who, being of God's own appointment, is therefore the fittest person to offer up your requests for you, and to assist you in the other offices of religion. Such a spiritual physician is therefore to be applied to, and not only desired once or twice for form-sake, but so as that he may perform the several parts of his office constantly during the person's sickness. This is one considerable branch of his function, and would prove of admirable use, if duly put in execution.

Euseb. And so it certainly would, if the generality of mankind were but as wise as they ought to be.

Theoph. It is a dismal consideration, to think how great a part, I say not, of mankind, but even of them that call themselves Christians, and have passed all their days in this our truly excellent, primitive, apostolical Church, live at such a rate, that they seem to have little more than the name of Christians, to distinguish them from *Jews, Makometans, or Heathens*. I have heard *Theodorus*, and other divines, make sad complaint, with great grief and sorrow of heart, that, when they go to assist their sick neighbours in their necessity, they find them too often so intolerably stupid and senseless as to the business of religion, that it evidently appears to have been none of their care, and little good is to be done with them. Many times they are not sent to at all; and, when they are, it is too often to very little purpose, considering what sort of persons they have to deal with. The man they are to visit, desires to partake of their prayers. He looks upon himself as taking his leave of this world, and begs they will beseech Almighty God to grant him a happy passage into a better. But, as to the conditions required on his own part, and without which there is no hope of salvation, he is a great stranger to them. If he be asked, What grounds he has to hope, that God is reconciled to him, and has forgiven his sins; his answer is, That he has lived quietly and peaceably, has wronged none of his neighbours, and so he hopes well of himself. But ask him to give an account of his faith, and he does it very lamely. He has lived always in the bosom of the Church, and commonly has made a part of the publick congregation; but, not having been taught his Catechism when he was young, nor having duly accustomed himself to read the Scriptures, and other good books, since, he is almost as little versed in the principles of Christianity, as if he had been bred up amongst the savage *Indians*, or in the deserts of *Arabia*. This is a dreadful case, and such a discouragement

ment to a faithful pastor, as one would scarce imagine possible in a Christian country, and where the free use of the Gospel is allowed, and the reading of it encouraged, and its doctrines continually explained and inculcated, as they are with us: yet I am well assured it is too true, and too common.

Euseb. This is a sad story, if it happen but now-and-then.

Theoph. I doubt, if you ask of them who have had occasion to know it best, you will find it no such rarity as you may imagine. And then if you inquire into his practice, he hopes well of it; but, alas! he is miserably deficient here too. He was bred up with a profession of religion, and has avoided some of the more heinous sins, such as robbery, adultery, murder, or solemn perjury, which he has never been guilty of, tho' perhaps he has made no conscience of twearing in his ordinary conversation, in direct opposition to our Saviour's prohibition, *(b)* *Swear not at all*; nor is notorious for drunkenness, or lying, or cheating, though possibly far from being innocent in any of these respects. As for the worship of God in his family, he is as perfect a stranger to it as can be, having never prayed with them, morning or evening, since he had them to pray with, and possibly but rarely by himself; nor perhaps has he so much as used himself to beg God's blessing upon his meals, or to return thanks for them. He has taken no care of his children, *to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. He minded indeed to get what wealth he could for them, and to settle them in the world to the best advantage; but, as to their everlasting welfare, he hath had as little regard for that, as for his own; which he seldom, if ever, seriously thought of. He went on carelessly, and did as he saw others do, but never troubled himself to inquire whither the path he was in would lead him, and whether the end of it would not be death, and everlasting destruction.

(b) Matth. v. 34.

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Euseb.

Euseb. This is a woful proof of the great need such have of all the assistance that may be, to rescue them, if possible, from those intolerable tortures they have been so long preparing for themselves.

Theoph. It is a melancholick employment to visit such thoughtless sinners, both because of the dreadful condition they are in at present, and because likewise of the little impresson is like to be made upon them, by all the best advice that can be given them, the most urgent and pressing exhortations that can be used, and all the most amazing terrors, that can be represented to them, or the most blessed hopes that can be set before them.

Anchith. Can they possibly forbear considering at such a time as this?

Theoph. It is too evident they can. Either they care not to hear of the danger they are in; or, if they give it a patient hearing, they hope God is merciful, and will pardon their sins; they meant no harm, and they trust he will therefore be favourable to them; they are sorry they have offended him, and wish they had done otherwise, and perhaps make some faint promises of being wiser for the future, if it may please God to restore them to their health. But, as for any real signs of a true and hearty repentance, these are rarely to be met with among such nominal Christians.

Euseb. This is a lamentable case. But yet, since, if they will ever be brought to consider, they will do it upon a near prospect of death; and since it is found by experience, that some few are then so awakened out of their former lethargy, as thenceforward really to become *new men*; it is very fit they should have the means used, to try what the effect will be.

Theoph. And those who are duly mindful of their flocks, will not refuse to do the utmost in their power, for reclaiming such; tho' it is easy to imagine, what a mortification it must be to them, to observe the difficulty of their undertaking, and the little hope they have of success in it. This is a great discouragement

to a good man ; but will not deter him from performing his duty to them, whatsoever the event be. And it is a wonderful comfort to him, if at any time he be so happy, as to awaken either a stupid, or a hardened sinner into a sense of his duty, to be truly humbled for his guilt, and earnestly desirous, not only of pardon for it, but of ability to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*.

Euseb. Hence we see, what reason there is to try, if any good can be done upon the worst of men ; who we may be sure will hearken now, if ever.

Theoph. And this confirms what I said, that the minister ought to have notice, when any in his parish are sick, that so he may attend them, and do what service he can for them. For not only these, but the holiest and best of Christians, will acknowledge the great benefit of his assistance, of which they are so sensible, that they seldom need to be put in mind of sending to him, and are rejoiced at the sight of him, when coming to minister to them, and are always highly thankful to him for it. This therefore, is our Church's first direction to the sick, That *notice be given to the minister of the parish* of his sickness.

In the *second* place, inquiry is to be made, whether the sick man has settled his temporal affairs ; and he is to be exhorted to make his will immediately, if it be not already done.

Euseb. A very proper exhortation upon divers accounts.

Theoph. Most certainly ; but not in relation to *Anchitbanes*, who, to my certain knowledge, has made his some days since : it had been better to have done it sooner ; but, being done, there is no occasion to press it now.

Anchitb. Theodorus, good man, when he was first so kind as to give me a visit, told me, he was commanded to inquire what care I had taken, as to the disposal of my temporal concerns ; and was so urgent with me to make no longer delay, lest haply I
might

might die intestate, and bring great mischief by it to my family and relations, that I forthwith sent for an attorney, and dispatched that affair, as *Theophilus* has declared.

Theoph. It were greatly to be wished, that all who have any estates to leave behind them, would be persuaded never to be without a will, and ever-and-anon to overlook it, and see what occasion there may be for any alterations in it. I have heard of some that have renewed their will annually; and I cannot but think it very prudent, in such as have great dealings in the world, to do it. And all others ought to amend what they shall think defective in it, upon every considerable alteration in their circumstances.

Euseb. This undoubtedly were very adviseable, if men would be prevailed with to hearken to it. But, alas! the generality are so far from thus repeating their will, that they will not be got to make it at all, till they find themselves at the point of death; and it is well, if they can be invited to do it then.

Theoph. They can no more endure to think of making their wills, than of setting about their repentance. And hence it too often comes to pass, that tho' they acknowledge both necessary, and promise, and seem resolved, to do both before they die, they are both put off till it is too late, and so are never done at all. It is highly reasonable therefore, that this should be one part of the sick man's examination, to the end that if he have hitherto neglected either of these duties, he may be persuaded to apply himself to it with all the speed that may be.

Euseb. It were much rather to be desired, that persons would take care of both, in the time of their health and strength, when they are better qualified for the performance of them. But since the most part will not be brought to this, by any consideration whatsoever, they have the more need to be put in mind of it when they come to die.

Theoph.

Theoph. And thus we are already fallen upon the next part of the priest's office in visiting the sick; which is, To examine them concerning the reality and integrity of their faith, and the nature and sincerity of their repentance. As to the former of these, the truth and integrity of their faith, the office is very express and clear, the form of doing it being directed to be, by propounding the several articles of the Apostles Creed, by way of question, whereby to learn, whether the sick person do really and truly believe them all.

Euseb. This Creed containing in it the sum of our Christian faith, that is, of what is necessary to be believed by each one of us, in order to salvation; it is but fit, the sick man should be sure to satisfy himself, whether he has taken care to be fully informed, of what it so highly imports him to know and believe *to his soul's health.*

Theoph. This therefore the minister is to put him in mind of, and he is accordingly to deal faithfully and impartially by himself, and by no means to deceive himself, either with an ill-grounded, or a false faith; which, howsoever it might stop the voice of his conscience at present, will stand him in no stead, when he shall be called to give up his account at the last great day. And then, as to the nature of the sick person's repentance, the priest is to inquire, and so are they themselves too, into their hatred of, and humiliation for their sins, the forgiveness of all that have injur'd them, their desire of pardon from whomsoever they have offended, and their readiness to make restitution to any they may have wronged.

Euseb. Till a man is thus dispos'd, there is no hope left for him. And there is therefore all the reason in the world, that this should not only be propounded to him, but, if he be found negligent in this respect, he should be pressed with all the vehemence and earnestness that may be, to make the best amendment his present unhappy circumstances will admit of.

Theoph.

Theoph. This is the last remedy he has left; and if he will not be persuaded to make use of this, nothing farther remains for him, but despair and misery: which ought to excite him to leave no method unattempted, whereby he can any way hope to retrieve himself out of this wretched condition, and to try, by all means that can be thought of, whether it be yet possible to obtain the favour of God, and a well-grounded hope of salvation. But, considering *Anchithanes's* manner of life, and his usual care to please God, and prepare for his latter end, I shall not insist any farther upon this. I proceed rather to another part of the minister's office in his intercourse with the sick man; which is, *fourthly*, To put him in mind of making a *special confession of his sins, if he find his conscience troubled with any weighty matter*, and then proceed with him as he finds him a true penitent, or not. But this, together with the administration of the holy sacrament, and the absolution upon your *earnest desire* of it, having been all performed by *Theodorus*, I pass over these too.

Euseb. If I mistake not, *the minister is earnestly to move such sick persons, as are of ability, to be liberal to the poor.*

Theoph. You are not mistaken. This is to be made a *fifth* part of the sick man's business, and he must be sure to take care of it now, if he have not done it before; as *Anchithanes* had done plentifully in his health, when what he gave, was a much better charity than it would have been at this time: though now, by way of addition to his former benefactions, he has left a farther considerable sum to that purpose, in his will: so that neither is there occasion of recommending this duty to him.

Euseb. I trust Almighty God will give him an abundant *recompence at the resurrection of the just*. But what is the duty you would mention?

Theoph. A quiet, patient deportment under his distemper is a *sixth* duty, necessarily incumbent upon the

the sick man, and which he is to take a particular care of: a duty, which (so far as it respects Almighty God, and the obedience that is due to his most holy Will, and accordingly is to be put in practice at all times, whenever under any pressure of calamity) has been already so largely recommended at a former meeting, that I need say no more of it. Wherefore I shall only observe here, that he is to be patient and easy as to those who are about him, to assist him in his sickness. He is not only to take care, that he be not like (c) *Jonah*, angry at Almighty God, for his hand over him; but neither may he be peevish and fretful towards those who are doing good offices for him; which were an ill requital for all the benefit he receives by their means. This sort of carriage, I grant, is not readily avoided, when a man is tortured with excessive pain, or heat, or thirst; so that he knows not which way to turn himself to be at rest. But yet a good Christian will watch against it; that he do not return disobligations and affronts, for the kind assistance they afford him.

Anchith. This caution comes seasonably to me, who am too apt to be provoked at every little occurrence, and I know not how to help it. I do not encourage myself in it; and I never used to be so before; which makes me hope it is the effect of my disease, and will be forgiven me upon that account. But, however, I do endeavour to prevent it as far as I am able.

Theoph. And so you ought: for meekness and patience are virtues of no small account in the Christian religion. And sickness is a most proper time for the exercise of them, so far as the man can recollect his thoughts, and govern himself. And though he cannot then command himself as at other times, and so is more easily transported beyond his bounds; yet is the due government of his passions so much the more commendable, by how much the more he finds himself inclined to give way to them.

(c) *Jonah iv. 9.*

Euseb.

Euseb. These are some of those duties, which concern the sick man as such, and are to be attended to accordingly, by all that would make a right use of their sickness, to God's glory, and their own everlasting advantage. But by the discourse we had by the way, it seem'd to me, *Theophilus*, there are several other duties to be practis'd upon this occasion, and which the sick man ought to employ himself about, as especially preparatory for death and eternity.

Theoph. It is true, there are several others, besides these hitherto mentioned, that each one ought to be exercised in, whenever it is his lot to languish upon a sick-bed, and be in expectation of death: the chief of which I shall now recite, as the time, and *Anchithanes's* strength and patience, will give me leave.

I. The first is, *a serious consideration of death*: That the sick man bethink himself in a solemn manner, what it is to die, and pass into the other world.

Euseb. 1. Death is no less than a total separation of the soul and body, and so a dissolution of our natural frame and constitution. And it will concern every one to provide for this, that he may be able to bear up against all the terrors of it with courage and magnanimity, and not be overwhelm'd with sorrows upon every appearance of it.

Theoph. You quite mistake me, *Eusebius*; for I do not mean what I speak of death, in relation to it as such a quitting this earthly tabernacle, which is a matter of no such great concernment. For though these two old associates having, perhaps, for threescore or fourscore years successively, so constantly attended each other, as never to have been parted one minute, the apprehension of such parting may seem terrible beforehand, and put the man into a perplexity at the thought of it; yet, if rightly consider'd, there is no just cause of being dismay'd at this; because, though it must be own'd, the body hereby becomes only a senseless, useless lump of cold clay, and afterwards the food of worms, the soul, which is by far the principal part, still retains its viva-

city. This dies not, but is immediately translated into another state, where it not only remains alive, but shall do so to the time of judgment. And, when that great day comes, its former companion, the body, shall be rais'd, and reunited to it, that so they may continue together to all eternity. So that whatsoever damage there is in their present separation, it will be abundantly compensated at the resurrection, when they shall meet again, and be conjoin'd to each other, with such an intimate and perpetual union, as shall never be dissolved. In short, if the disjunction of the soul and body puts an end to this short life, the resurrection, which is necessarily to follow in its due time, will bring them together again, never to be parted more. And this, methinks, should banish all the trouble, that might otherwise arise from the thoughts of death, considered under this notion; namely, that it is only the body, the grosser and less valuable part, that dies, and that too but for a little time; after which both soul and body shall be restored to each other, and enjoy one another, with all the security that can be desired or imagin'd, and this to all eternity. Nor is this all, but the body shall arise a pure, refined, and spiritual nature, and by this means incomparably fitter for the soul's operations, than ever it has been here. (d) *This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory, so as never to make a second attempt upon them.* And can any one think it hard to put off this meaner earthly cloathing for a while, to receive it again with infinite improvement; to lay aside this less useful instrument of the soul, that he may have it at length restored, in far greater perfection, purged from all its corruption, healed of all its weaknesses, and secured against mortality, and all those diseases, which are so many internal and natural, and all those unhappy accidents, which are so many external contingent causes of it. This must be a blessed change for a corruptible,

(d) 1 Cor. xv. 54.

perishing,

perishing, mortal body, subject to sicknesses and pain, and a thousand sorts of deaths, to be made glorious and immortal, and set above the power of the many misfortunes, whereto it is liable here. The soul also shall be wonderfully improved; its capacity shall be enlarged, so that *(e) though we see now through a glass darkly, yet then face to face; though now we know in part, then we shall know more thoroughly, even as also we are known*: the consideration whereof, if rightly attended to, will necessarily be a powerful antidote against those fears and disturbances, whereto people ordinarily find themselves subject upon this account. And for this reason it was, that I told you I did not speak of death, as a dissolution of the vital union, that is betwixt the soul and the body, because not of any such ill consequences, as that a man needs to be greatly concern'd about it.

Euseb. 2. You cannot mean it, I am confident, as to the pains of death; because, though these are many times very sharp, they are of no long continuance, and usually the shorter, when they are the sharper. It is a melancholick sight to behold a dying man confined to a still and darkened room, stored with pots and phials, with his relations and friends about him, consulting his physicians, and endeavouring by all means possible, to prolong a miserable life, though it be but for a few hours; to see him lying in this uncomfortable condition, panting for breath, sighing and groaning, and making the most doleful complaints of the agonies he feels in himself, too great for weak mortality to conflict with, and which must inevitably wear him out in a very little time. You cannot be supposed, I say, to mean this, when you advise to be thinking of death; because all this treatment, how painful soever to the patient, and howsoever shocking to others, is but of very short duration, and will soon be intirely over.

(e) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Theoph.

Theoph. I do as little mean this. For this, tho' the more common, is not the only way of leaving the world. Some are snatched hence by outward accidents; some by polypuses, epilepsies, apoplexies, convulsions, lethargies, and other latent distempers, that dispatch them in a moment. Some have been overcharg'd with an excess of meat or drink, or of sudden joy or grief. And some again are worn out by age, and daily decay, and give up the ghost without so much as a sigh, or a groan. And when death appears with its most frightful countenance, and armed with its dreadfullest terrors, as to the manner of it, tho' it be very affecting for the present, all this is of so little continuance, and will be over in so short a space, as not to be of any consideration, in comparison of what is to follow afterwards.

Euseb. 3. There is another prospect of death, that is terrible to most men, and which needs to be provided against; and that is with respect to the loss that comes by it. For it is no less than an eternal deprivation of all the good things of this life, which mankind are so insatiably enamour'd of, and in pursuit whereof they usually spend all their days. And most men will think it very hard, to be cut off in the midst of their hopes, when perhaps they have almost arrived at the top of their desires; to be then stripped of all, and laid as naked in the earth, as if they had never been owners of any thing. (f) *Be not afraid,* says the Psalmist, *though one be rich, or the glory of his house be increased; he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him. While he lived, he counted himself a happy man; but he shall certainly follow the generation of his fathers, shall descend to the same place of death and corruption, the dark and silent grave, whither they are gone before him, and shall never see light.* How prosperous soever his circumstances are, when once death calls for him, there is no withstanding such a summons; but imme-

(f) Psal. xlix. 16, 17, 18, 19.

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diately

diately he must forsake them all; and (g) go to his long home.

Theoph. All this is very true. When death comes, every one must leave his riches, his honours, his pleasures, his friends and relations, and whatsoever is dearest to him in this world. All which are highly charming to the earthly-minded man, and it strikes him to the heart to think of parting with them. And oh that he could but have them any way secured to him as long as he shall have a being! He would then desire no better portion; nor would he be prevailed upon to resign his interest in them, for all the most inestimable, unconceivable, immortal glory, and blis and felicity of the other state. Yet after all, (b) they are so short and uncertain a tenure, and liable to such a variety of casualties, and losses, and frauds, and violences, and at best are unserviceable to so many of the purposes of life, that a wise man would never suffer himself to be over-fond of them. But then, if we call to mind, how extremely dangerous and destructive they are; that (i) ye cannot serve God and mammon; that (k) if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; that (l) the love of money is the root of all evil, there being, as the orator speaks, (m) *Nul-lum officium tam sanctum atque solenne, quod non avaritia comminuere atque violare soleat*, no duty so sacred and solemn, as that covetousness will not impair and violate it; I say, if this be taken into the account, the consideration thereof may well abate our reasonable affection for any thing of this nature, and put us upon another sort of thoughts and designs. And indeed to reflect how flitting and uncertain, and again, how useless and unsatisfactory all sublunary enjoyments are,

(g) Eccles. xii. 5. (b) Οὐ γὰρ μέγα τὴν ἀνθρώπων τελευτὰ πολλάκι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀνθρώπων τελευτᾶν, καὶ ἵνα ἡμεῖς μυρία ἐπὶ τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ ὑποδείγματα τῆς τελείης τὸ ἄσπερον πλάτῃ· μεμαθηκαί, ὅτι ὁ μὲν κενεημένος ἐστὶ τὸ δὲ κτῆμα ἀσώλῃ. B. Chrysof. Tom. 5. Serm. 19. in Psal. xlviii.

(i) Matth. vi. 24. (k) 1 John ii. 15. (l) 1 Tim. vi. 10. (m) Cic. pro Quintio, N. 13.

should

should certainly raise up our minds to the joys that are above, and should teach us to (n) *look not at these temporal good things which are seen, but those which are infinitely better and more desirable, that are not seen, and are eternal.* And were but our hearts once thoroughly set upon these, we should soon find it no difficult task, to despise all this life's transitory imperfect satisfactions and enjoyments, in comparison of those greater, and more durable, and consequently far more valuable treasures. This would make us even long to be at home, at our Father's house, to dwell in those blessed mansions which he has prepared for his beloved, to partake of that (o) *fulness of joy, which is in his presence,* and those most transporting pleasures, which are *at his right hand for evermore.* Such is the vast difference, that is betwixt all the most enticing allurements of this world, and the unconceivable felicity of the other, that he who seriously attends to it, will find no more difficulty in resigning all here, to enter upon that far better state, than in parting with a poor homely cottage, amongst the meanest of the people, to take possession of a plentiful fortune, a stately palace, and an honourable authority and jurisdiction. So far would he be from grieving at his change! It is related of (p) *Cleombrotus* and (q) *Gorgias*, and *Cato*, and (r) divers others amongst the heathens, that they were so weary of this world, and had such a longing and eager desire after the rewards they promised themselves in the other, as to be not only reconciled to death, but even fond of it; and that they therefore set themselves to hasten it, as if it would not otherwise have seized them time enough. And what an intolerable shame is

(n) 2 Cor. iv. 18.

(o) Psal. xvi. 11.

(p) B. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 1. c. 22, & Cic. Tusc. Quæst. l. 1.

c. 34.

(q) Lib. de Consolat. Ciceroni attribut.

(r) Lactant. Instit. l. 3. c. 18. & Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 13. c. 20.

Varen. de Religione in Regnis Japon. c. 1. Le Sieur Jovat. Hist. des Religions, Tom. 3. p. 180, 184, 185.

it for Christians, who have nobler rewards in view, than these could ever dream of, to be in bondage to what they were so much masters of! And above all times is such a dotage on the world most inexcusable, when a man is convinced, that, in all probability, he is entering upon another life, wherein he can neither have occasion for, nor receive any benefit from, what he is so loth to leave. This argues his Christianity to have but little influence upon him, since otherwise he could not possibly be so regardless, either of the glories it offers in a future state, or of the strict obligations it lays upon all its professors, to beware of being enslaved to any thing here below.

Euseb. 4. Death may be considered as a deliverance from this frail life, and the numerous calamities, and misfortunes of divers kinds, that so constantly attend it. *Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.* They are natural to him, during his passage through this vale of tears and sorrows: and he can no more hope to escape them, than to live without breathing. As we are all, even the most miserable of us, made partakers of innumerable, undeserved blessings; so, on the other hand, those who are in the most advantageous circumstances, have nevertheless, their different sorts of crosses and vexations to contest with. (s) And that death puts an end to these, can be no misfortune; nor need the thoughts of such a blessed change to break any one's rest beforehand. Wherefore I cannot suppose this to be what you mean, when you call upon the sick man to consider, what it is to die.

Theoph. You may be sure it is not. (t) For who would ever dread to be delivered from all his infirmi-

(s) *Moriar? hoc dicis, definam ægrotare posse; definam alligari posse, definam mori posse. Senec. Epist. 24.*

(t) *Εἰ ἔγω τάλας εἰμὶ, λιμὴν τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἔτος δὲ εἶναι ὁ λιμὴν πάντων θάνατος. Arr. Epictet. l. 4. c. 10. Ἐπὶ δ' ἀπιστοῖσι μηδὲν εἶναι μέγα θάνατος, ἀλλ' εἰς ἀναισθησίαν χωρεῖν τὰς ἀποθήσκοντας ἀποφαίνονται, παρὰ τῶν ἐνλαύδα εὐόμενοι ἡμᾶς εὐεργετῆσι. Justin. Mart. Apol. 2.*

ties,

ties, losses, cares, wrongs, affronts, or whatever kind of troubles? This were to be esteemed a singular happiness; and so far from administering just cause of complaint, or dissatisfaction, that a man ought, in all reason, to conclude himself not a loser, but a gainer; not ruined, but saved by it. But there is still another notion of death you have not yet touched upon.

Euseb. 5. There is so, that it is the door to an eternal state. And what a remedy is this against all the fears of death, to think, that when we come into the other world, we shall be sure never to die more, but live to eternal ages! O eternity! eternity! What an immense addition is such a boundless duration to any sort of happiness! But what an excess of happiness must it be, to live in peace, and rest, and joy; and neither hunger, nor thirst, nor meet with any cross accidents, or ill usage; nor be sick, nor grow old, nor die through a long eternity! This is such a blessed and lasting duration, that our present transitory and troublesome life bears no manner of proportion to it; and therefore ought, by no means, to be set in competition with it.

Theoph. Most certainly it ought not; though there had been no more in the case, than that the life we enter upon at death, and which we are henceforward to lead in the other world, is of a perpetual, eternal continuance, and shall never draw towards an end. But that which is each one's chief concern, and calls for his utmost care and diligence, and which, to this end, I now recommend to your consideration, is the nature of the shore whereon we shall be landed in that eternal world. (u) Our bodies, at death, universally return to the earth, from whence they had their first extraction: but our souls pass immediately into an-

(u) Mortalitas ista, ut Judæis & Gentilibus, & Christi hostibus pestis est, ita Dei servis salutaris excessus est. *B. Cypr. de Mortalit.* Miseriorum omnium, quas viventes pertulimus, finis est in morte. *Inter Ciceronis opera, lib. de Consolat.*

other life, either of happiness, or misery; less perfect, in the mean time, but which will be fully completed at the resurrection, and the general judgment of all mankind: at which time, our blessed Lord, who is to be our Judge, acquaints us beforehand, that some shall be set on the right-hand, and the rest on the left; and that a very different sentence shall be past upon them, to the unspeakable comfort and happiness of the former; and the inevitable, intolerable, irreparable destruction of the latter. (x) *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: and (y) shall say also unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And accordingly, (z) These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* So also the Apostle St. Paul assures the Romans, in his epistle to that church, (a) *That God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* And in the Revelation of St. John, (b) *He, says the apostle, that overcometh, shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake*

(x) Matth. xxv. 31, 32, 33, 34. (y) Ver. 41. (z) Ver. 46.
 (a) Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. (b) Rev. xxi. 7, 8.

which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. From which, and multitudes of other places in the New Testament, it is easy to observe, what reason every one has to be exceedingly solicitous, as to what shall become of him in the other life. Seeing some shall be infinitely happy and glorious, and others no less miserable, and this to all eternity; none, who has not his understanding grossly stupified, can avoid believing it to be a matter of the highest importance to him possible, to have his portion amongst the former. For this therefore each one should be providing all his life long, as the only way to save his soul, and make himself for ever happy. But when he comes to be confined to his bed, and sees his end at so near a distance, that he can almost look forward into the other world, as *Moses* did from mount (c) *Nebo* into the land of *Canaan*, he will be naturally inclined, eagerly to desire, and long to know, what will become of him in that other state. If he find, that God is reconciled to him, through Christ, and so he may look upon himself as intitled to the heavenly felicity, what a mighty comfort must such a reflection be to him! How will he be transported, and almost overwhelmed with joy, at so ravishing a discovery! And, on the other hand, if his sins bear such witness against him, that he has no hope to escape the wrath to come, but finds himself even upon the brink of hell, and ready every hour to drop into it, such a doleful prospect, if he be capable of thinking at all, will be sure to plague and torment him; and almost cause a Hell within him, whilst he is not yet cast into those dismal flames. To lose an eternal enjoyment of the perfectest and completest happiness, in all respects; to be undoubtedly assured, that there are inestimable rewards to be distributed amongst the faithful followers of our Lord; immortal diadems to be put upon their heads, and thrones and kingdoms to be allotted them, (d) *pro*

(c) Dent. xxxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

(d) Tertul. Scorpiac. c. 6.

varietate meritorum, according to their several qualifications and services; to know, for a certainty, that Heaven is a place of incomprehensible satisfaction and delight, infinitely beyond what can be express'd, or conceiv'd; and that the righteous shall be everlastingly possess'd of it; and yet, not only to come short of this so vast a *recompence of reward*, but to meet with a Hell in lieu of it; to be cast into an insatiable gulph of excessive anguish, and incurable despair; to be lodg'd amongst the devils, and damned spirits; and to be tortur'd and plagued by them with the utmost spite and malice; to lie yelling and roaring, and tossing and turning, in burning streams of the hottest sulphur, without intermission or cessation; to meet with all these unconceivable agonies, instead of enjoying an uninterrupted state of the perfectest happiness with the saints above, is so sad and doleful a case, that no words can express, or fancy imagine, the terror of it: and, especially, if hereto be added the duration of this woful state; that it is to last for evermore, and never, never, never to have an end; but after as many thousands of years as there are drops of water in the ocean, grains of sand on the shore, spires of grass throughout the earth, and stars in the firmament; after as many myriads of years, or even as many millions of ages, all this misery will be no nearer a conclusion, than at the first beginning of it. Whom does not such a meditation presently pierce to the quick? It is a very afflicting thought to a good man, that this must be the everlastingly wretched state of far the greater part of mankind. But to the sinner, who deservedly expects to be in a little time irrecoverably plunged into all this woe and misery, the dread of it, one would think, were enough to bereave him of his senses; or, perhaps, to strike him quite dead. At least, it must make such an impression upon him, that if any thing in the world can bring him to a serious temper of mind, and put him upon consulting his escape from
such

such a scene and weight of sorrows, this must do it. This meditation alone, to one that apprehends himself already within a few steps of so intolerable, dolorous a condition, should be sufficient to melt a heart of adamant, and dissolve it into floods of tears. And those men must be most desperately regardless of their own safety, whom so awakening a reflection will not put upon contriving, by all means possible, to secure themselves. And oh, that the sinner would therefore be persuaded to bethink himself, and grow wiser, before it be too late! That he would make the best use he can of the few hours he has remaining, to try if God may yet be prevailed with to extend his mercy to him, upon a hearty and exemplary repentance! Let him weigh well within himself, that when once the slender thread of his life is cut, it will be too late for him to think of obtaining a pardon afterwards. For he must then be dragg'd to his trial, with all his sins about him, and thence to the place of execution, to be racked, and tortured, and tormented, till he shall have paid the utmost farthing. Who can possibly foresee this to be his own condition, and forbear, one minute, to summon together all his forces, and exert the utmost of his power, to rescue himself out of it, with all the speed that may be?

Anchith. A sense of such excessive danger is the strongest motive that can be, to a serious recollection, and a diligent use of whatsoever means are necessary, in order to a recovery out of it.

Euseb. (e) *Mercury* in *Lucian* advises to meditate upon death, and the little distance it is off, as a singularly useful means for disposing us, both to live soberly, and to die easily, And, agreeably hereto, (f) *Seneca* professes of himself, that he took care to live in continual expectation of that great day, when judgment shall pass upon all his former years; and found this happy effect of such his practice, that he was above

(e) Char. seu Contempl.

(f) Non timorè itaque componor ad illum diem, &c. Epist. 26.

the fear of dying, whenever his time should come. And again he affirms, that (g) *None can hope to see that time, with a chearful and composed countenance, who has not taken care to reconcile himself to it beforehand*; and hence advises, (h) *to be always mindful of it*. Much more should Christians lay to heart the infinite concern they have depending upon their fitness to die well, and as becomes those who have an abundant assurance, incomparably beyond what the rest of the world had, of a future immortality, with which nothing here below can bear to be set in competition.

Theoph. And the nearer they draw to this endless state, the greater reason they have to be ruminating upon it, and upon that death, which is the only, and the certain passage to it, and so to prepare themselves for it, as that it may happily convey them into eternal glory. These sorts of meditations justly challenge our frequent and serious thoughts, and the sooner we fall upon them, so much the better.

Euseb. Death, as it is a passage to eternity, is a matter of that great weight, that if it will not bring men to their wits, and make them serious and considerate, it is not to be hoped, that any thing else should be able to do it. He that can stand out against such an awakening shock, may justly be given over as desperate and incurable. He now sees our Saviour's doctrine manifestly verified, (i) *if he should gain the whole world by the loss of his soul*, it would be an exceedingly dear bargain, and what he would have cause to lament for ever and ever. And it is very strange, if men can be so hardened in their sins, as to stand out against all these terrors, and, instead of husbanding the little time they have left, to cast themselves willingly, and with their eyes open, into the pit of destruction.

(g) Epist. 30.

(h) *Tu tamen mortem ut nunquam timeas, semper cogita.* Ibid.

(i) Matth. xvi. 26.

Theoph.

Theoph. You see then, I had very good reason to recommend a sober and solemn consideration of death, as an effectual course, in order to a serious preparation for it.

Anchith. You had so ; nothing being a more powerful incentive to an earnest desire and endeavour to fit ourselves for our latter end, than duly to bethink ourselves of that everlasting state, either of incomparable happiness, or inexpressible tortures, wherein death will most certainly lodge every one of us, me, in all appearance, in the first place, and you not long after.

A Prayer for a sanctified Consideration of Death.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who givest us life, and breath, and all things ; and on whose infinite goodness, and mercy, thro' Christ my Saviour, is all my dependence, both for the present, and in order to a future state ; cast an eye of pity upon me in this declining condition ; and give me grace to make a due improvement of it. Let no terrors of death, how near soever, prevail over me, and affright me out of my hope in thee. And suffer me not, on the other hand, vainly to presume upon thy goodness. Open mine eyes, and awaken my sluggish soul, that, seeing how little time I am to expect in this world, my heart, my thoughts, and all my desires, may be set upon another ; and my whole business may be to secure to myself an interest therein. Give me such a comfortable and well-grounded assurance of another life with thee in Heaven, as may protect me from all those fears of death, to which I might otherwise be in bondage. I am sensible, that death is not only a departure hence, but a translation into another eternal world, where I must live for ever, either with thee and my blessed Saviour in endless glory, or with the devil and his angels, in the bottomless abyss of misery. And, accordingly, I do most earnestly beg, that the result of these most weighty meditations may
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be a care, still more and more, to mortify all my worldly and carnal inclinations, and to make the best use that may be, of the short remainder of my time; that so I may be in a readiness to quit my station, whenever thou shalt call for me. To this end, teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart to the only true and saving wisdom; that, being fully convinced, how frail a creature man is, and how near I, in particular, seem at this time to be to my great change, I may give all diligence to perfect my preparation for it, that so the longer I continue here, the better I may improve myself to thee; and the nearer I come to my latter end, the fitter I may be for it, and for the fruition of thyself in everlasting glory, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another, for Deliverance from everlasting Death.

P*Reserve me, O Lord, and strengthen me against all this world's temptations; and of thy great mercy save me from the wrath to come. Be with me now, and at the hour of death, and let no evil hurt me. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of all hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to my prayers. But spare me, O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer me not to miscarry at my last hour; but save me from the bitter pains of eternal death; that whatever becomes of me in the mean time, I may by no means be irrecoverably miserable in a future state. Amen.*

Another, for a happy Eternity.

L*ORD, whilst I live, enable me to live to thee, that when I die, I may die in thy favour; and whether in life or death, I may be thine; and after death may live and rejoice in thee, and may bless, and praise, and glorify thy holy name thro' an endless eternity. Grant this, O blessed God, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. Amen.*

Theoph.

Theoph. II. Another duty I would recommend, as necessarily incumbent upon the sick man, is to *wean himself from the world*. I have already observed the insufficiency of all earthly possessions and advantages, and, by consequence, the great reason we all have to labour after such an indifferency towards them, as that they may never be able to weigh down our souls, and keep them from aspiring after a far more desirable reward in the highest Heavens. And indeed, (k) till we have got the conquest over ourselves, it will be impossible to quit this present life with a willing mind, tho' at the call of God himself; because these earthly objects will be so many dangerous retractsives, filling men with sorrow at the thoughts of leaving them, and making them loth to depart thither, where they shall be sure to have no farther enjoyment of them. He that has his affections glued to the earth, will not know how (if it could be allowed him) to mount up to Heaven, with any satisfaction or ease; but will recoil, start back, and faint, and be in agonies, and almost dead, at the apprehension of bidding farewell to them. And, whilst the thought of such a removal is thus distasteful to him, it is not to be imagined, that he can be reconciled to it. Nor ought he to look upon himself as in a due preparation for death, till he has got his soul at liberty from the bondage it had been in to these vain allurements: which, one would think, were no hard task, considering the many crosses and disappointments (l) which usually accompany them; and that themselves also are, at best, deceitful and unsatisfactory, and (m) all

(b) Siquid mirabere, pones Invitus. *Horat.* l. 1. Epist. 10. v. 31.

(l) Siquis modò secum animo reputàrit, quàm calamitosa sit hæc nostra omnis vita, quot periculis, quot morbis, quot casibus, quot curis, quot incommodis, quot vitiis, quot injuriis sit obnoxia, quàm exigua pars ejus nobis abeat, non dicam cum voluptate, sed non aliquâ ægritudine contaminata; deinde quàm fugax etiam ac præceps, propemodùm, etiam gratulabitur iis, qui maturus eam reliquerint. *Erasm. Declamat. de Morte.*

(m) *Eccles.* i. 14.

the works that are done under the sun, are but vanity and vexation of spirit. The dying Christian has so much a nobler purchase in his eye, that his desires should be carried forth intirely after that, and he should be heartily ashamed to take up with any thing short of it. Especially seeing, that had these earthly enjoyments, of whatever sort, been far more valuable than they are, they might be so to others; but can be no longer of any use to him, who is upon his entrance into another world. He may look back, and see what dangerous temptations they have been to him; but all he has now to do with them, is only to take his leave of them, and sue to God for the forgiveness of any past abuse of them he has been guilty of. They are serviceable, to a great degree, in our passage thro' this present life; and if well improved, in acts of mercy and charity, will bring us to an ample reward above in Heaven; but this is all the benefit he can expect from them. We are only intrusted with them, during our stay here; and must necessarily resign them, whenever we lay aside *this earthly tabernacle*, there being no farther use we can then make of them. They will contribute nothing to the wicked man's ease, when he comes to languish in such excess of pain and torment, in the burning lake, as nothing in the world can mitigate. And those in Heaven will have no need of them; for they will be everlastingly possessed of vastly greater and more durable treasures; and so will look down upon all this world's glory, as not deserving any regard from them. And this lesson it is the sick man's part to teach himself beforehand, that when he shall be called hence, he may quite disburden himself of such his heavy clog, and may be perfectly at liberty to obey, and be gone. And who can tell, whether one great end of God's not cutting men off immediately, but continuing them for some time under their sickness, may not be to work this good effect upon them? He very well knows, what an inexcusable fondness

the generality of mankind have for these things; how intent they are upon getting them; how they torment themselves with the fear of losing them; and again, how sorrowful they are at the loss of any part of them; what an occasion they are of many sorts of wickedness; and how people will venture to be damned for them. And where he sees any thus enslaved to them, it is a great mercy in him, to allow them a little time of respite, wherein to reflect upon their vanity and emptiness, to repent of the sins whereinto they have at any time been drawn by them, and to set themselves free from them. And it is highly unreasonable for such an one, not to comply, with all the willingness that may be, with this so gracious a design, so proper and seasonable in itself, and which may turn so highly to his own advantage. And I must therefore beg leave to recommend to every one the apostle St. Paul's advice, which he gave the *Corinthians*, so to get themselves affected with a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of our abode in this world, as not to be brought into subjection to any thing in it. (n) *Now, this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.* (o) Wherefore, seeing we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, what unaccountable folly is it to set our hearts upon what we must be sure to leave, in a little time; and the leaving whereof will, by this means, become a sore vexation to us!

Euseb. Nothing seems more naturally serviceable, to take our minds off from these things, than a sick-bed; both because it shews the man, that he is not like to be allowed any longer enjoyment of them; and because he now finds, by sad experience, not

(n) 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

(o) 1 Tim. vi. 7.

only,

only, that they cannot prolong his declining life, but likewise, how little they can contribute towards giving him any ease from his pains, or recovery from his sickness.

Theoph. It may be a trouble to him to cast his eyes back, and see how much more agreeably he had lived formerly, than he does at present; though, as yet, possessed of as much of this world, as ever he had in his whole life. But it is a demonstration of the absurdity of suffering his affections to be still fixed upon what he is now fully convinced, to his cost, will (p) *not profit in the day of wrath*, (q) will never save the owner from death, nor give him ease whilst he draws towards it; and presses him hard to recal his thoughts, and place them upon those more amiable objects, which will be sure never to fail or disappoint him, if he can but once attain to them. However he might formerly have been deceived with appearance, instead of reality, and take these gaudy vanities for solid and substantial treasures, it is full time for him to change his opinion of them, now that he finds them all to be but a feeble support; and that they will leave him in a disconsolate condition, when he has most need of their help. Wherefore, since he can obtain no relief by their means, now that he is in unusual want of it, common prudence would direct him, not to put a higher value upon them than they deserve; not ever to trouble himself more, for what he sees is thus vile and worthless.

Euseb. A late learned prelate (r) gives a very diminutive character of them, from the wise man; who, he tell us, sums up their whole value in these two words, *vanity* and *vexation*. And then he asks a very rational question; *At what price you would rate vanity.*

(p) Prov. xi. 4.

(q) Quæ nec felicitatem, nec quietem præstare possunt, quæ cæcis suis amatoribus pollicentur. *Lud. Berus de præparat ad mortem*, cap. 1.

(r) Bishop Hopkins's *Vanity of the World*, Pag. 105, 106.

which is nothing; or vexation, which is worse than nothing?

Theoph. And well he might. For what man, not intirely bereaved of his senses, would be persuaded to love, and disquiet himself for, what he is satisfied beforehand, he can never put any trust in?

Anchitb. And so I remember (s) another devout and affecting author, though, I confess, not of our communion, tell us, *God sows gall and wormwood in the goods of this life, that the soul, being afflicted, may repent and turn to him.*

Theoph. And who would be enamoured of gall and wormwood? Are these such irresistible temptations, that the prospect of heaven and eternal happiness is not to be preferred before them? Away with such sottishness and stupidity, and let us begin at length to grow wise, and truly *consider our latter end.* Let us remember, we know not how speedily we may be called hence, and then what plenty soever of these enjoyments had fallen to our share, they will all be sure to forsake us at the grave, if they had not done it much sooner. And let us shew ourselves men, by a slight regard for them, that tho' we use them as we have occasion, we never dare to abuse them, or ourselves, upon their account. Let us esteem of them, according to their intrinsic worth, not our own vain imaginations. And let us be sure to employ them to the end for which they are committed to our management, the supply of our own and others necessities. Let us also sit so loose to them all, that we may as easily lay them aside when we come to have no longer need of them, as the traveller does his thick and heavy clothes in a hot sun-shine day, or his dirty ones at the end of his journey. This is a duty that all are obliged, as Christians, to be continually exercised in, nothing being more plainly required in

(s) Euseb. Nierembergh of the difference between the Temporal and the Eternal. 1. 3. c. 9.

Scripture, than (t) *not to love the world, nor the things of it.* But the sick are to be particularly careful of it, upon a twofold account: *First*, Because they know assuredly, if they do it not before they leave the world, they can never hope to do it to any advantage hereafter; and again, because, if they depart hence, enslaved to these vain delusions, the love and friendship of the world is such enmity to God, that they shall never obtain an admission into his glory. So that this is one necessary branch of that more immediate preparation for death, which every one is to take care of, namely, to wean ourselves more and more from the world, and see that the less time we apprehend ourselves like to continue in it, the less regard we have for it; that so we may be able to leave it with the greater indifferency for any thing in it.

A Prayer for Victory over the World, and the Attainment of God's gracious Promises.

I.

LORD God Almighty, infinite and eternal, all the whole Heavens are thine, and the earth hast thou given to the children of men. Blessed be thy holy Name, for that portion of the good things thereof, which thou hast bestowed upon me thy most unworthy servant, that thou hast not exposed me to those wants and difficulties, that many others, better than me, are forced to struggle with, but hast made my life easy and comfortable to me. I am ashamed, and do sincerely humble myself before thee, for all mine abuses of this thine abundant goodness to me; beseeching thee, of thy great mercy, to pardon these my miscarriages, and to give me grace to make a right improvement of all thy gifts for the future, if it shall be thy good pleasure to allow me time for it. Or if thou hast determined to remove me hence immediately, yet do not refuse to wean my heart first from these transitory enjoyments, that they may no longer have any dominion over me: vouchsafe me a right notion of them,

(t) 1 John ii. 15.

that

that I may value them according to their true worth ; so as neither to be unthankful to thee, my God, for them, nor unwilling to resign them, whensoever thou shalt please to demand them, or to take me away from them. Work up my soul to such an indifferency towards them, as that they may be no hindrance to me, in the prosecution of what is infinitely more desirable. And raise up also my affections to the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God, that my heart may be fully set upon them ; and I may be able to despise all that this lower world contains, in comparison of them. This I beg for thy dearly beloved Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

INcline my soul, O Lord, to labour, above all things, after a perpetual enjoyment of thee my greatest good, and an attainment of those everlasting rewards, which thou hast prepared for thy faithful disciples, in the kingdom of Heaven. And suffer not any sublunary advantages whatsoever, to press down my desires to the earth, and earthly things. Remind me of my most holy profession, and the hope that is set before me, and what admirable encouragement I have, not to lay up to myself treasures here below, where rust and moth do corrupt, and thieves break through and steal ; but readily to overlook all things of this nature, in respect to the infinite glories of the other life, whither my Saviour is gone before : To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory world without end. Amen.

III.

O GOD, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity, mercifully grant to me such a measure of thy grace, that I, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partaker of thy heavenly treasure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Theoph. III. Another duty particularly incumbent upon the sick man is, to renew and perfect his repentance ;

to review his whole life past, and bewail the errors and sins of it, to sue for the pardon of them, and unfeignedly and solemnly resolve against them for the future. It is an amazing consideration to think, how great a part of mankind have the whole business of their lives to begin, when they are at the point of death. They have sinned away all their working time, and perhaps not so much as once set about what they came into the world for; and now that they are almost quite past their labour, they have it all yet to do. No wonder of such be struck with astonishment at the sight of their own egregious folly, when they come thus late to be convinced, into what dreadful circumstances they have brought themselves. What racks and tortures must they feel within their own breasts, when they find (u) how great a work lies upon their hands, and how unfit they are for the dispatch of it, and yet how little time they have before them, had they been better able to undertake it; and withal, that they are most assuredly undone, ruined and undone irrecoverably, and to all eternity, except they can get it finish'd before they are taken hence. Some are so intolerably stupefied by a long course of sin, as to have no sense of their danger, when thus upon the brink of irretrievable perdition. But, as for those who have their conscience awakened by so dismal a prospect, it is impossible to express the anguish and remorse, wherewith they must inevitably be seized, the stings and twinges they must incessantly feel within themselves, from the terrible load of guilt that lies so heavy upon them: which whether they shall ever get pardoned, after all they are able now to do in order to it, God only knows. But I am sure they have all the reason that may be, to bestir themselves with all their might, and make the best improvement possible, of those few minutes that are yet behind.

(u) Ad tantum negotiorum agmen non sufficit ille temporis articulus. *Erasm. de præparat. ad Mortem.*

Euseb. That undoubtedly they have; and must be the most wretched sots that ever were, the most senseless part of the whole creation, if they leave any thing undone, that can possibly be done, in order to a recovery out of this doleful condition, whereinto they have obstinately brought themselves. This every one knows to be true, though very few have that sense of it they ought to have.

Theoph. But these are not the persons with whom I am concerned at present; my design now being to speak to the case of such as had minded the business of religion in the time of their health, and are now to perform only what relates more immediately to their sickness. And even these are, as I said, still to renew and complete their repentance, to call themselves to an account for the defects of their wonted acts of contrition, and to be grieved and ashamed, that they had not been more perfect, and better answered the design of their profession, and to endeavour to supply what was wanting in them. And they should look upon it as a great mercy to them, that God is pleased to allow them a space to do this in, and moreover, by the weight of his hand upon them, to excite them to take care of themselves. And in truth, considering the frailty of human nature, and the many failings and defects, neglects and oversights, the best of men are liable to in this life, there are none but may see reason enough to wish for some time, wherein to reflect upon, and, as much as in them lies, to rectify, what they have not done as they ought.

Euseb. It is too plain, that our very repentances are so imperfect, as to need, that they should be repented of, and that we endeavour by an after-act to supply what was wanting in them. And the sick man is therefore to call over again, as he has time, and his memory, and his command of himself, will allow, the main offences of his life past, and to humble himself for them, and to try to promote in himself all the detestation of them that may be, and to pray and intreat

for the pardon of them, and, together with these, of his *secret faults* likewise, such as possibly had escaped him at the time of their commission, but which now are certainly out of his remembrance, and as for this reason they are not capable of, so neither do they require, a particular repentance. If he has been guilty of any acts of impatience, or misbehaviour of whatever sort, since his sickness seized him, or since he last solemnly humbled himself for his sins, these he must particularly call himself to account for. But he must not confine his repentance to these, but must see, that he let none other escape unobserved, that he can call to mind; but must bring them all under his consideration, and repeat his prayers for forgiveness of them, and for strength against all temptations to any of them; and must be highly displeased at himself, for having ever given way to them.

Anchitb. If he has heartily repented of his former sins, and has repeated his repentance throughout the course of his life, and has done this heartily and sincerely, it is to be hoped, that they were forgiven him before, and that therefore so much of his work is already dispatched.

Theoph. What you say, *Anchitbanes*, is very true. But you seem not to remember, that all our pardon, whilst we remain in this life, is conditional, and may be forfeited by a subsequent disobedience or neglect. You know (x) very well the case of the unmerciful servant in the parable, to whom his lord, out of mere compassion, had forgiven no less a sum than ten thousand talents; and that tho' all this had been freely remitted, and assuredly would never have been demanded of him, had he not afterwards shewn himself unworthy of so great a kindness; yet upon his inhumanity to his fellow-servant, who owed him an hundred pence, (y) his lord, having notice hereof, was wroth with him, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. And the danger is the same to you,

(x) Matth. xviii. 24, &c.

(y) Ver. 34.

and me, and all of us. For let our sins have been ever so truly pardoned, it is still in our power to provoke Almighty God to revive the whole charge against us, and condemn us, as effectually as if we had never repented at all: so that you see what a powerful reason this is for inviting to the performance of the duty here treated of, namely, that we depart not the world with such an unconcernedness for our past sins, as to provoke God at last to bring us to a strict account for them.

Euseb. Hence it appears, that the sick man is, as far as his circumstances will admit, to recollect the most material miscarriages of his life past, to see whether he has repented of them all.

Theoph. But neither is this the whole of the duty mentioned. For he is to take care of his repentance, not only as to the extent of it, that it reach to, and comprehend under it, as far as may be, all his sins of whatsoever nature, or howsoever aggravated, but as to the intenseness of it too, that it not only be sincere and real, but serious and well-grounded, and including in it a great degree of sorrow for, and enmity to, the sins repented of. And because this his sorrow and enmity can never come up to the height his guilt deserves, this should be helped, as he shall be able, by repeated acts of contrition, whereby to set him at the greater distance from all his iniquities: which as it is to be done at other times, so more especially in time of sickness, that so the penitent may leave the world in the best disposition he can possibly attain to for a better. And whosoever is once brought to a sense of his own condition, and of what an irreparable hazard he runs, every moment that he ventures being taken hence, without a due preparation for his change, will hardly need to be invited to what his own conscience will most earnestly press upon him, and let him have no quiet till he has done it.

Euseb. The apostle *St. John* having spoken of our blessed Saviour's appearance at the last great day, and the unconceivable happiness of the righteous at that

time, in that they (a) *shall see him as he is, and shall be made like to him*, draws this inference from his assertion, that (b) *every one who hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure*. This the Apostle declares to be the natural result of such glorious hopes as are set before Christians, such as that none who seriously attends to them, but will find himself under an invincible necessity, to rectify whatever is amiss in him. And though he had not imprudently deferred it till he comes to languish upon a sick-bed; yet when he is reduced to this condition, and has his spirits faint, and his strength gone, insomuch that he is but one remove from the grave, and looks upon himself as ready every hour to drop into it, how careful soever he had been to reform and amend his doings, he will not then know how to forbear endeavouring to conclude well at the last, by getting his soul into as fit a posture as he can, for that judgment he continually expects to be called to. It is a great addition to a misfortune, to have it happen when just upon the point of safety; and be undone, when in appearance past all danger.

Ab! portu qui teste perit, bis naufragus ille est.

It is a double infelicity to be cast away, when a man has struggled through a long tract of waves and storms, and pleased himself with the sight of his haven, and was ready to set his foot on shore. And none who have any regard for their own welfare, but will be particularly desirous to secure it by all means possible, when just stepping into the other world, and to this end to make their repentance as intire and perfect as this frail state will allow them.

This is, in all appearance, the (c) last scene of the last act of a man's life; and if this be not performed well, he passes off the stage with shame and ruin, and

(a) 1 John iii. 2.

(b) Ver. 3.

(c) Hic est extremus humanæ vitæ, velut fabulæ, actus unde pendet vel æterna felicitas hominis, vel æternum exilium. *Erasm. de præpar. ad Mortem.*

has no room left for farther comfort or hope. And this obliges him to labour after the utmost exactness, in giving the finishing stroke to the whole work, to the end he may be approved for his fidelity, and may enter into his Master's joy. For this cause he is to examine himself, how far his *conversation* has been as *becomes the Gospel of Christ*, and to own and bewail his guilt where it has been otherwise, to be humbled for all his lesser, and even for his involuntary sins, and to sue most earnestly for mercy and pardon through Christ, and to resolve to do or suffer any thing, rather than ever willingly to displease him more.

A Prayer for Ability to perfect our Repentance.

I.

O LORD God Almighty, who dwellest in the highest Heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all; I can never sufficiently lament my sins and offences, whereby I have from time to time provoked thee against mine own soul. Let it not be in vain, that thou hast thus long borne with me and not cut me off; as I had justly deserved. Grant I may be more sensible than ever of my own vileness and unworthiness, by reason of my manifest iniquities. And vouchsafe me such assistances of thy Holy Spirit, as that I may be enabled to cleanse and purify myself from all pollution; and such fervour and earnestness in my addresses to thee, that I may obtain thy pardon, and whatsoever else I seek to thee for. Deal not with me as I have deserved at thy hand, but speak peace to my soul, and command deliverance for me. I am thine: O save me; and do not so remember my sins, as not to remember also, that thy property is always to have mercy, and to forgive. Hear me, O Lord, when I call upon thee: and cast me not away in the time of weakness; forsake me not when my strength faileth me. It is but a very little time that I can expect to continue in this world; help me to improve it so, as that I may secure to myself an interest in the bliss and felicity of that which is to come. Complete my repentance; increase

crease my graces; subdue all my lusts and passions; promote all my good inclinations, and lead me in the way everlasting. Suffer me not, whenever death shall come, to die with any weight of guilt upon my conscience, with an affection to any thing that is evil, or with any sin not repented of. Make me to love thee with all the powers and faculties of my soul, to fear thee above all things, to obey thee dutifully and constantly, and so to endeavour by all means possible, to wipe off the stain of whatever is displeasing to thee. My desire is truly to bid defiance to all my sins, and never to look favourably again upon any one of them, to humble myself before thee to that degree, that thou mayst look graciously upon me, and be reconciled unto me. Help me, I beseech thee, to search out all my transgressions, and so to judge myself for them, as that I may not be judged and condemned by thee at the last day. Be merciful, O Lord, be merciful to me; forsake me not in my extremity; but watch over me for good. Forgive my sins, heal all my infirmities, receive and strengthen me; bless, refresh, and comfort me; and cause me to rejoice in thee, both now, and at the hour of death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

O Almighty and everlasting God, vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both my heart and body in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that thro' thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, I may be preserved in body and soul, thro' our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Theoph. Another duty——

Euseb. I would not be thought rude, good *Theophilus*, in interrupting you; and yet I cannot forbear intreating leave, before you proceed to the next duty, to do a piece of justice to our most excellent Church and Liturgy, in relation to what you have been discoursing under this last head.

Theoph. Pray how is that, *Eusebius*?

Euseb. I know not how to forbear taking notice, what just reason you have hereby given, to wonder why any should so needlessly take exception at the petition in the Litany, wherein we pray for *deliverance from sudden death*.

Theoph. A very reasonable petition certainly !

Euseb. No doubt it is. For though a sudden death (*d*) may well be supposed far easier, than that which makes its slow and gradual approaches, and gives warning some time before it actually makes its seizure; and again, though a good man may die very happily, when snatched away without any notice; yet, where a matter of the highest importance imaginable is depending, a wise man would desire to depart hence with all the advantage he can, and as completely fitted for, and intitled to as large a measure of happiness, as may be. And were I ever so confident of being translated into Heaven, whensoever I am taken hence, as I hope I shall be; I could however be very well content to bear some days of pain and sickness here, if they may but any way contribute, either to the greater certainty of my salvation in the other world, or to my obtaining an ampler share of its felicity.

Theoph. This exception to the *Litany* is highly unreasonable and ill grounded, *a sudden death* being oftentimes very unhappy. It is unhappy as to this world; occasioning divers sad inconveniencies to families, by preventing those settlements of estates, which might have made a peaceable and suitable provision for the several members of them: and it is far more unhappy, in relation to another life, by preventing either in whole, or in part, that preparation that might otherwise have been made for it. It may possibly seize a good man in such disadvantageous circumstances, as to become of very ill consequence to him; and

(*d*) Mitius ille perit, subitâ qui mergitur undâ,

Quàm sua qui liquidis brachia lassat aquis.

Ovid. de Ponto, l. iii. eleg. 7.

may

may snatch away the sinner, and send him forthwith to Hell, without any sort of warning. It prevents likewise the exercise, and so deprives of the reward, of that patience, and submission to the Divine Will, which are the proper employments of a time of sickness; and that sorrow for sin, and those purposes of amendment, which are the most genuine fruits of a lingering death. And can any reasonable man think, the avoiding a few days smart will countervail these and all the other mischiefs that may arise from it?

Euseb. I see not how he can: which was the foundation of my observation, and such as I persuade myself will hold good against all that prejudice, or fear, or self-love, may urge to the contrary.

Anchitb. I readily agree with you both in this; and am at this time so far from repining, or being any way dissatisfied, at what it has pleased God to lay upon me, that on the other hand, I now esteem it a particular blessing, that he has allowed me this time of sickness, wherein both to *set my house in order*, and more especially to *trim my lamp*, and finish my accounts, and *commend my spirit into his hands* with that faith, and humility, and contrition, which becomes one in my circumstances. I am now upon the conclusion of my warfare; and can you suspect I would behave myself so unworthily, as to complain I am required to continue the fight a few days longer? So far from this, that I shall never esteem my sickness too long, if it prove a means, at last, of any way increasing my reward in the other state. All my concern is, lest through carelessness, and negligence, and a love of the world, or the wiles and stratagems of the devil, I should be withheld from making that improvement of it, which may be justly expected from me.

Theoph. Such ought to be the care of all good men; and the more of it, so much the better. Wherefore I humbly beseech Almighty God to increase it in you, and all in your condition. But now to proceed:

IV. A farther duty, incumbent upon the sick man, is, *to arm himself against the fear of death*. What the consequents of death are, has been already observed, to put us all upon a diligent preparation for it; but not to intimidate and discompose any with the dread of it. For to the good man it is no such enemy, as that he shall need to be dismayed at it. It is to him no other than a deliverance out of this vale of tears, this region of sorrows and complaints, into those more delightful mansions, where will be nothing but joy, and pleasure, and honour, and glory, and majesty, and the most sublime, most rapturous, and most lasting bliss, felicity, and happiness, to reign with the blessed angels, the holy prophets, the glorious apostles and evangelists, the triumphant saints and martyrs, for ever and ever: so that all the harm of death, to such, proceeds not from itself, but purely from their own misapprehension of it, and from their not having yet attained to a right notion of the effect it is like to have upon them. For let a man be once well secured of an interest in God's mercy, and our blessed Saviour's mediation, and he will see nothing in death that would tempt him to flee from it; and, if he does not earnestly long for it, he will however receive it with an evenness of mind, and a chearful resignation of himself to the Divine disposal, because he knows this is the only way he has, to be instated in eternal happiness.

Euseb. It is no wonder, that (e) *Epicurus* cried out of death as *Φρικωδέστατον τῶν κακῶν*, the dreadfulest of all evils: as *Aristotle* also professed it to be (f) the most terrible of all terribles. Yet were there such amongst the heathens, as would have taught them to have another notion of it. For not only *Plato* speaks of it as (g) full of hope; and *Antisthenes* declared (h) the greatest happiness that could besal a man, to be a happy

(e) Diog. Laërt. l. 10. in vit. Epicuri. (f) Erasmi. de præpar. ad Mortem. (g) In Phæd. (h) Apud Diog. Laërt.

death; and (i) the *Gymnosophists* could despise the fear of it; and (k) *Epictetus* wished to be released from the bonds of this life, and become nearly related to the gods; and *Antonine* teaches of a wise and virtuous man, (l) that he is not concerned how late or how soon he dies, but is ready to depart whenever his time comes; but (m) *Cicero* thus expresseth himself, I cannot agree with those, who begin of late to teach, that the soul dies together with the body, and all is extinct by death. The authority of the antients sways more with me, either of our own ancestors, who attributed such religious rites to the dead, which verily they never would have done, had they believed them to have no claim to them; or of those who taught the nation of the Greeks by their precepts and instructions, and especially of him who was by *Apollo's* oracle esteemed the wisest of men, who did not talk this and that, as is too common with most, but always said the same thing, namely, that the souls of men are of a divine nature, and that the way to Heaven lies ready before them, whenever they depart hence, but most ready of all to the best and justest of them. And at another time he tell us, (n) that *Hegeſias* the Cyrenian disputed so largely about death, that at length king *Ptolemy* thought it necessary to put a stop to him, whereby to prevent his auditors making away with themselves to taste the sweet of it.

Theoph. This was great, for such who lived before the times of Christianity, and had no other arguments for a future state, than their own reason could furnish them with. But since (o) life and immortality has been brought to light by our Saviour, it will be strange, if the professors of his Gospel are not able to bear up against death with greater magnanimity, and a more encouraging and blessed hope, than was before to be expected. Death is now disarmed of all its former terror. And we have no reason to shrink from it,

(i) *Diog. Laërt.* in *Proem.* (k) *Arrian.* l. 1. c. 9. (l) *Eccl.* i. 3. c. 6. (m) *De Amicit.* c. 4. (n) *Tusc. Quæst.* l. 1. (o) 2 *Tim.* i. 10.

unless it be through our own folly, in not having made a timely preparation for it.

Euseb. It is a matter then of singular importance, to learn to die whilst we live, and may possibly be as yet some distance from death. And there is none therefore who has not great reason to be often ruminating upon his latter end, and trying to fit himself for it, and become in a manner acquainted with it beforehand, that so, whensoever it shall come within his view, it may appear no strange or surprising spectacle, nor he receive its summons with reluctance. Death is frequently, in Scripture, compared to sleep. And, as we compose ourselves to the one, by putting off our clothes, lying down in our beds, drawing our curtains, and closing our eyes; so ought all likewise to prepare themselves for the other, by reflecting upon the certainty of it, the little reason a good Christian has to be afraid of it, the deliverance it will be to him from his pains and sickness, and all the other evils of this life, and the security it will bring with it of never being liable to any of them for the future; but especially the necessity of it in order to the possession of those infinite rewards which are promised to the righteous in the other state, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive*; happiness incomparably beyond all that this world affords, abounding with blessings of divers sorts, and of inestimable value, and which will continue for evermore; which none can believe and expect, without finding the thoughts of death easy to him, and its approach welcome. Nor can any of the things of this life be supposed to have such an influence upon him, as that he should not be ready to part with them upon so good an account. He will rather have brought himself to triumph over death, as no longer able to do him any mischief, blessing himself at the sight of it, and crying out in the apostle St. Paul's language, (p) *O death, where is*

(p) 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

thy

thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And who would not glory in such a deliverance? He is no wise man that would not desire to be able thus to comfort himself, upon a prospect of his approaching dissolution; that whenever it comes, no guilt may discompose him, no fears disturb or interrupt the peace of his mind; but his soul may take its flight into the other world, with a joyful and a cheering hope of eternal rest and glory. Nor is he a friend to himself, and to his own principal interest, who would not be at whatever pains to get himself into this condition. It is a just observation of (q) Bishop Taylor, that *he who is afraid of death with a violent and transporting fear, a fear apt to discompose his duty and his patience, either loves this world too much, or dares not trust God for the next.* And St. *Augustin* supposes, that a righteous man (r) *Ideo mori velit, &c.* will desire to die, not out of an aversion to this present life, but because of the hope and expectation he has of living far better in the other state. And it must be granted, that though death itself be not agreeable, the charming prospect that the good Christian has beyond it, may very well remove all the bitterness of it, and make it at least as tolerable, as a tempestuous voyage at sea is to the worldly-minded man, when undertaken in order to a noble estate and authority.

Anchish. No pains of death can be too sharp to be borne, in order to the attainment of those exceeding great and precious promises, which are made by the Gospel to all that faithfully labour after them. And oh! that it may please Almighty God to give me a sure title to them! and I shall never fear any thing that can befall me in my passage towards them.

(r) *Holy Dying*, Chap. 3. Sect. 8. (r) *De Civ. Dei*, l. 14. c. 25.

A Prayer for Victory over Death.

O Almighty Lord God, thou alone knowest how near I am to my great change; if thou wilt, thou canst raise me up, and grant me a longer continuance here. But I find so great an alteration in myself, and the violence of my dislemper has spent me to that degree, that I can expect nothing but death, and that too in a short space. To thee therefore I flee for help, beseeching thee to support my spirits by thy divine influence, that I be not discouraged nor discomfited in my last conflict. Death, I am too sensible, is terrible to nature, and the guilt of my sins lies heavy upon me; and this life is not yet wholly divested of its temptations. So that I have great need of thy assistance, thy mercy and goodness, to carry me through those difficulties, and protect me against the fears of death, that under whatsoever form it shall present itself, I may not be affrighted at it. Fix my mind, O God, upon the glorious recompence of reward promised above in Heaven; which infinitely surpasses all that this lower world contains. And convince me, I beseech thee, of my title to it. Assure me, that, in Christ Jesus, my sins are forgiven me, and thou, of thine abundant goodness, art reconciled to me, as if I had never sinned against thee. These are unspeakable blessings that I beg of thee; but since thou hast encouraged me to ask them, with hopes of acceptance, and my Saviour has graciously promised those who unfeignedly come to him, that he will in no wise cast them out, this emboldens me to pray, that what I dare by no means ask in my own name, thou wilt condescend to give me in the name, and for the sake, of thy ever blessed and dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Euseb. What would you prescribe next, Theophilus?

Theoph. V. To improve his faith in Christ, that he call to mind the inestimable price his Lord has paid for him, the wonderful degree whereto he humbled himself

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or our redemption, and the full satisfaction and atonement hereby made for all our sins; and comfort himself with the consideration of so transcendent a deliverance, and steadfastly rely upon Christ for the benefit of it. He knows assuredly, that (s) *there is no salvation in any other*, there being *no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*, but his alone; and moreover that the salvation purchased by him is of universal extent, that every one who duly seeks after it, may be partaker of it. For so says St. John, (t) *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. And to the same purpose St. Peter testifies, that (u) *to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*. And to them that look for him, as the apostle to the Hebrews teaches, (x) *he shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation*. So that it is easy to observe, what excellent encouragement Christians have to place their trust in Christ, and depend upon him for the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their lame and imperfect righteousness, in hope of obtaining, by his mediation, an interest in the kingdom of Heaven; which they could never have pretended to without him. And though such a faith as this will never of itself justify and save us, being but one branch of that holiness which the Gospel requires of all its professors; yet is it of such absolute necessity, that there is no hope of being saved without it. For, alas! it is impossible for poor sinful creatures to be admitted into glory any other way, than by the blood of Christ, (y) *who gave himself a ransom for all*; and (z) *through whose stripes alone we are healed*. But since he has thought fit to offer himself in our stead, to become a price of redemption for us, every good Christian may well look upon himself, as in a happy condition through him. For now says

(s) Acts iv. 12.

(t) John iii. 16.

(u) Acts x. 43.

(x) Heb. ix. 28.

(y) 1 Tim. ii. 6.

(z) Isa. liii. 5.
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he Apostle, (a) *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* And again, (b) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* And what a support is this to the dying man! who, if he can but look back, and see that he has been careful to approve himself a faithful disciple of our blessed Lord, may rest assured, that no slips or infirmities, nor even his grosser sins, if sincerely repented of, shall obstruct his entrance into glory. He has now (c) *boldness, or liberty, or, as (d) Grotius understands the phrase, Jus intrandi in summum cælum, a right to enter into the highest Heaven, the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, assumed at his incarnation, and afterwards offered upon the cross; and needs not doubt, but, if we ourselves put no rub in the way, (e) he who spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him also freely give us all things; life, and comfort, and joy here, and eternal felicity hereafter.* This is an instance of unparall'd loving-kindness, that must necessarily banish all unreasonable diffidence from the mind of every good man. And let no one therefore in the least distrust his readiness to fulfil all his promises, and make all those partakers of his salvation, who have faithfully endeavoured to capacitate themselves for it. Here therefore are three things the sick man has to do: *First*, He is to weigh well with himself his own forlorn condition, without this salvation. It is the great unhappiness of fallen man, that none of us can justify himself before God, nor make an atonement for the manifold iniquities, wherewith we are all too manifestly chargeable before him. Though he has not only deliver'd his Will

(a) Rom. viii. 1. (b) Ver. 33, 34. (c) Παῖσις, Heb. x. 19, 20. (d) In loc. (e) Rom. viii. 32.

to us plainly and intelligibly, and strictly injoin'd our obedience to it, but has moreover given us infinite encouragement to the observance of it; yet such is both the weakness and the depravity of our nature, so prevalent are the temptations we meet with in the world, and so subtile the contrivances of our spiritual adversary for our ruin; and, as the effect hereof, so many and heinous are our sins, and so deadly the guilt contracted by them; that we are all in a most deplorable case, and must inevitably have perish'd everlastingly, if left to ourselves; it being utterly out of our power to rescue ourselves from the terrible vengeance that hung over our head, by reason of these our transgressions.

Euseb. This no man can deny, that has ever taken an account of his past life; nay, that does but carefully survey the actions of any one day of his life. And for this reason it is, that repentance is continually called for, throughout the Gospel, as of absolute and indispensable necessity in order to salvation.

Theoph. It is so. And this shews how miserable a state we had all been in, if left to ourselves; inasmuch as then we could none of us have had a title to any thing better than everlasting destruction, the heavy wrath of God being the just demerit of our undutifulness and disobedience.

Euseb. This therefore the sick man is to ponder with himself, and lay seriously to heart, to humble him for his sins, and dispose him for the pardon of them.

Theoph. And not only so, but farther to make him more sensible of his unspeakable happiness, in having a remedy provided for him, when in such dreadful circumstances; which is the next thing he is to consider with himself, the infinite goodness of God in entering into a new and more gracious covenant with sinners, whereby to open a passage into life and happiness, that all who worthily apply themselves to him,

him, may be saved, notwithstanding all their guilt. His patience was admirable, in bearing with them, and not delivering them up to the just severities of his indignation, and cutting them off in their provocations, as they had highly deserv'd. But this alone had been only a short reprieve, which would have left them in a little time to fall under the weight of his vengeance. Wherefore, to prevent this, he most mercifully condescended to admit them again into covenant with him, upon far more favourable terms, than what had formerly been insisted upon; freely engaging thro' Christ, and by virtue of his mediation, and sufferings in our behalf, to forgive the sins of all those who believe and repent, and give them to inherit eternal life. And now we may intirely depend upon it, as an undeniable and undoubted truth, that Christ our Lord *(f)* has, by the sacrifice of himself, obtained eternal redemption for us; a redemption that will be of eternal advantage to all who faithfully perform the conditions required on our part, and has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. He is that holy, that spotless Lamb of God, *(g)* who hath taken away the sins of the world, and whose *(h)* blood speaks better things than that of Abel. *(i)* He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. He has done all that could now be desired, and abundantly more than could formerly be imagined, to save us from the punishment due to our sins, and raise us to a state of immortal happiness, having undertaken not only to procure the pardon of our sins, and advance us to Heaven when we die, but in the mean time to conduct us in the way thither; to *(k)* open our eyes, and turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in him. And his undertaking has not failed, as indeed it could not, of its design'd success. For *(l)* him hath God

(f) Heb. ix. 12.*(g)* John i. 29.*(h)* Heb. xii. 24.*(i)* Rom. iv. 25.*(k)* Acts xxvi. 18.*(l)* Chap. v. 31.

exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins: repentance in order to salvation, and then remission of whatever sins are thus repented of. Christ, having suffered in our nature the punishment due to our sins, has thereby made satisfaction to his Father's justice; and so they shall not be imputed to us, nor we punished again for them. God is now reconciled to us, in and by Christ; and as ready to receive all true penitents into his favour, as if they had never sinned against him. Thus much the apostle St. Paul teaches, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. all things, that is, all things relating to our new and spiritual creation, spoken of in the verse foregoing: all these things are of God, the author of them, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us, to the apostles, and the ministers of the Gospel, the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And he repeats it again, Col. i. 19, 20, 21, 22. It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell: and having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven. And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprieveable in his sight. And, if we now miscarry after all, the fault is wholly our own, and all our misery and destruction is owing purely to ourselves.

Euseb. Hence it appears, what mighty obligations we are all under, earnestly and indefatigably to labour, that *the foundation, the word and promise of God*, may stand sure as to ourselves in particular; and that as we desire *the Lord* should know and acknowledge us to be *his*, we, in order hereto, be careful to *depart from iniquity*. Nor is it to be imagined, how Christians should think with themselves, to be benefited by our Saviour's suffering in our stead, and all the promises of grace
and

and mercy consequent hereto, whilst they refuse to perform the conditions requir'd on their part. O blessed *Jesus* ! Didst thou become incarnate, and suffer, and die, upon my account ? And dost thou now intercede in Heaven for me, to obtain the pardon of my sins, and reinstate me in thy Father's favour ? And can I possibly be so horribly ungrateful to thee, so desperately regardless of my own welfare, and so shamefully forgetful of all the obligations I am under, as still to persist in a most inexcusable disobedience to thy commands ? This were such an instance of unpardonable stupidity, that both heaven and earth, angels and men, may well stand amaz'd at the thought of it.

Anchitb. O the folly and madness of rejecting eternal life, when so graciously, so miraculously, purchased for us, tender'd to us, and most effectually secured to all, that do not senselessly incapacitate themselves for it ! What can those who are guilty of it possibly expect, but to *(m)* *be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ?*

Theoph. Your inference is very just ; for since so glorious a redemption has been wrought for us, wretched must be the case of all that neglect and despise it ; who shall not only receive no benefit by it, but shall be made to pay severely for their contempt of it. And for this reason, a third thing required of the sick man, in order to a steady reliance upon Christ for salvation, is, to weigh with himself, what disposition he is in for so inestimable a blessing. When our Saviour gave himself for us, to *deliver us from the wrath to come*, and procure us *an inheritance with the saints in light*, he demanded a capacity or fitness for it, in all that would hope to attain to this *great salvation*, that they should be *meet for it* : For so says the apostle, *(n)* *Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* And

(m) 2 Thess. i. 9.

(n) Col. i. 12.

whether a man be thus meet, can be known no other way, but by a serious inquiry into his own heart and life, to see what evidence he can find there of his repentance and uprightness of conversation. For which cause the sick man is particularly concerned to re-examine his conscience, and to perfect what that discovers to be amiss in him, with all the zeal and industry in his power. He should call to mind, as far as he shall be able, the graces that had been entrusted with him, and what improvement he has made of them; the patience that has been exercised towards him, and the temporal blessings that have been bestowed upon him, and to what purposes he has used them; the truths that have been revealed to him, and how firmly he has believed them; the precepts of holiness that were given him in charge, and how conscientiously he has observed them; the promises and threatenings that have been annexed to the performance or neglect of his duty, and what influence they have had upon him; how thankful he has been to our blessed Lord, for his infinite love in dying for him, and what care he has taken to qualify himself for the unconceivable benefit of it. These several parts of our most holy religion, he was to attend to all his life long; and now that he sees it drawing to a conclusion, common reason would direct him to look back, and try how far he has answered his obligation, and where he finds he has not done it, to set himself, if possible, to obtain a pardon for his disobedience, before it be too late. He is (*o*) to try and judge himself; (*p*) to prove his own work; to (*q*) examine whether *Christ Jesus be formed in him, or be he a reprobate*. And, if upon an impartial scrutiny he can acquit himself, as having fairly endeavoured to order his life in all respects as becomes a good Christian, this will be a solid foundation for an expectation of those glories, and that incomparable reward, his blessed Saviour has died to purchase for him: or, if his carriage appears to be otherwise, it

(*o*) 1 Cor. xi. 31. (*p*) Gal. vi. 4. (*q*) 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

will

will then have this effect, that it will naturally, and necessarily, put him upon a reformation, whereinsomuch as he perceives himself to have been faulty; and so will be the properest course he can take, for obtaining an interest in our Saviour's merits.

Euseb. Then it seems, besides the examination of ourselves, to be practised by every one throughout the course of his life, you would have the sick over-and-above to review and examine their examination, and see what flaws they can find in it on the one hand, or what comfort and encouragement from it on the other.

Theoph. Unless they do this, I cannot see what certain ground of comfort they can have in themselves, when they come to die. This is the only method of discovering them to themselves, and letting them see what room is left for them to promise themselves, that our Saviour will own them for his disciples, and give them to partake of the happy fruits of his sufferings and intercession.

Euseb. If upon such inquiry they find, that they have set themselves (r) with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, and to observe his commandments, and have unfeignedly repented of all their breaches of them, they need not question their salvation. For the scripture is very expresse, that God (s) will render to every man according to his doings; and particularly to them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; that (t) we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; that (u) the righteous shall go into life eternal; and, in a word, that (x) they are blessed, who do the commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city, the kingdom of Heaven, represented in that, and the foregoing chapter, under the figure of a city.

(r) Acts xi. 23.

(s) Rom. ii. 6. 7.

(t) 2 Cor. v. 10.

(u) Matth. xxv. 46.

(x) Rev. xxii. 14.

Theoph.

Theoph. All such, it is very plain, shall be saved; but then it is as plain, that they shall be saved only through the merits and mediation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. For, being, after the best of their services, not only unprofitable, but, in too many respects, undutiful servants, as upon inquiry they will find themselves to have been, they must still be but in a woful condition, if they had nothing but purely their own righteousness to depend upon. And it is therefore an undoubted truth, that when we have taken all the care we can to please God, we must yet fly to his mercy through Christ, and must beg, and pray, and hope, and trust, to be accepted only upon his account. Our own obedience is manifestly an indispensable condition of salvation; but this is so very lame and imperfect, and has so many failings and defects in it, that it must be acknowledged, after all, to be far from deserving what we aim at by it. (y) Christ is the only meritorious cause of all our hopes; and it is through him alone, that we can expect to attain the accomplishment of them. And on him therefore must the Christian be sure to rely, as his only stay, he, and none but he, being able to secure the salvation of all that come to God by him. (z) *Eternal life is the gift of God through him*; and our only way of coming at it is, by a diligent observance of the Divine Will in all respects, and then a serious and devout application to the throne of grace for reconciliation and favour, thro' his all-sufficient merits and intercession, that, by his interest and kindness, our past sins may be forgiven, our present and future services accepted, and our souls eternally saved. But never is this application more seasonable, or more highly necessary, than at the close of our lives, when the day wears away apace, and *the night draws on, wherein no man can work*. Then

(y) Si nostris benefactis confidimus, exultabit adversarius: fin in Domino Jesu figamus sacram ancoram spei, conciderit hostis noster, &c. *Erasm. de præparat. ad Mortem.*

(z) Rom. vi. 23.

is a more especial opportunity for trying to engage our Saviour on our side, to plead for us with the Father, to represent his own sufferings in our behalf, and to gain us an admission into those blissful regions, whither he is gone *before to prepare a place for us*. And by how much the better hope any have in this respect, by so much the easier will they find the remainder of their days here, and so much the more comfortable will be their departure hence. And consequently this is to be one considerable part of the sick man's care, to see how the case stands betwixt God and his soul, and what ground he can find to comfort and encourage himself in a steady dependance upon our Saviour, and how he may best promote his interest in him.

Anchith. It is a most inestimable blessing to a poor penitent sinner, that, when he is about to end his days, he can hope for the remission of his sins, and an entrance into Heaven, upon so favourable terms as are propounded by the Gospel to those who embrace them as there tendered to all true believers. And I most humbly beseech Almighty God, that this may continue my case to the last, that, as I have this hope at present, it may still support and never fail me.

A Prayer for a truly Christian and Saving Faith in Christ, and his Mediation.

O Most gracious and merciful Lord God, whose immense compassion prevailed with thee to take pity upon fallen man, and in thy appointed time to give thine only-begotten and dearly beloved Son, to become a price of redemption for him, to rescue him from the intolerable tortures whereto he lay obnoxious, and to capacitate him for an eternal enjoyment of thee, and of all thine inestimable rewards, in Heaven; grant that, by his mediation, I may obtain the forgiveness of all my sins, the assistance of thy grace, and whatever is necessary for leading me into the way of righteousness, and conducting me at length to thine everlasting kingdom. Let thy Holy Spirit

Spirit not only produce, but daily increase in me such a dependance upon the merits of my blessed Saviour, and such a thorough conviction of the all-sufficient efficacy of his passion, as that I may firmly, and at all times, place my trust in him, hoping for salvation through him alone. And yet suffer me not in any wise so to rely upon him, as to neglect the duty required on my part, and without which, I am sufficiently assured, that I never can be saved. Permit me not to content myself with a dead inoperative faith, and so to deceive myself to my own destruction; but make me duly mindful both of thy promises, and of thy commandments, that I may neither slight the one, nor allow myself in the known violation of any of the other. Give me such a sense of what my Saviour has done and suffered for me, and the great need I stand in of mercy thro' him, as that I may neither cast away my confidence in him, nor place it any where, but in him. Plant in me such a faith as may conform me to his example, may work by love, may overcome the world, and may crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts. And though I cannot reflect upon my manifold sins and iniquities, without a hearty and deep humiliation for them; yet let not the greatest of them ever tempt me to despair of thy goodness. All my hope is in thine infinite mercy, and my Redeemer's invaluable merits; O do thou confirm and establish this hope in me evermore. And vouchsafe to reckon me amongst thy children, and the heirs of that eternal glory, which thou hast promised to all that love and fear thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Theoph. VI. In the next place, the sick man should be put in mind, *To pray earnestly to God for mercy,* that by this means he may leave this world in a safe condition, and be delivered from all that guilt, which must otherwise have sunk him into the bottomless pit. He is not only to rely upon our Saviour's satisfaction as a sufficient price paid for him, but to beg of God likewise to accept of it as such, in rela-

tion to himself, to be thoroughly reconciled to him by means of it, and to blot out all his transgressions. And indeed there is hardly any man, who is not either perfectly senseless, or abandoned as to religion, and all that is good, that is not ready of himself to cry to God for help, when thus upon the borders of destruction.

Euseb. It is natural for those who had no sense of duty to God at other times, nevertheless to make their prayers to him, when in any considerable danger and distress. It was not the case only of those mariners who sailed in the ship with the prophet *Jonah*, that when (a) *there was a mighty tempest in the sea, and the ship was like to be drowned, they cried every man unto his God for safety*; (b) but it has been the common practice all the world over, that such as had no reverence for God at other times, have not been able to refrain from calling upon him, when in apprehension of some dreadful evil like to seize them. It is well known how that wicked city *Nineveh* humbled themselves, and fasted, (c) *and cried mightily unto God*, to try, if possibly they might prevent the speedy destruction wherewith they were threatened. So wicked *Abab*, of whom it is recorded, that (d) *there was none like him, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of God*; yet, upon the prophet *Elijah's* denunciation of destruction to himself, and his family, (e) *rent his cloaths, and put on sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly*, after the manner of mourners. (f) Thus *Cæsar* relates of the inhabitants of *Marseilles*, That when *C. Trebonius* lay in siege against them, all sorts amongst them, the younger and less considerate, as well as the elder and

(a) *Jonah* i. 4, 5.

(b) *Tum maxime Deus ex memoriâ hominum elabitur, cum beneficiis ejus fruenter honorem dare divinæ indulgentiæ deberent. At verò si necessitas gravis presserit, tum Deum recordantur, &c. Lactant. Instit. l. 2. c. 1.*

(c) *Jonah* iii. 8, 9.

(d) *1 Kings* xxi. 25.

(e) *Ver.* 27.

(f) *De Bell. Civ. l. 2.*

more serious, their wives and children, and their very guards, fell to their devotions, to beg a deliverance. And so says God of his own obstinate people the *Jews*, that how negligent soever they were of him in their ease and prosperity, their carriage would soon be changed when trouble came upon them, and they found themselves encompassed with sorrows. (g) *In their affliction they will seek me early.* Sorrows and misfortunes awaken mens minds, and put them upon looking out for help; and, since they know God is the only sure refuge for the distressed, they scarce need to be invited at such a time to address themselves to him. Hence it is easy to observe thro' all ages, so far as we have an account of them, how people have been wont to flock to the temples in times of distress, to offer up their devotions there, in hope of obtaining some relief from their grievances, of whatever sort. And the same method has been customary in times of imminent danger, as well as of present sufferings; all nations, whether heathens, Jews, or Christians, having constantly practised it. And whosoever would hope for the divine favour and protection, must not fail to take this course, when under any pressure or calamity. But never is there such occasion for this duty, as when a man is seized with some violent pain or sickness, that gives him just reason to expect a speedy translation into another world. When he finds almost no time left to do it in, this will be a cogent motive to him, to set about it with all his might, and never to give over till he has obtain'd a blessing.

Theoph. For this reason I shall not stand to press the necessity of what every one is naturally so prone to enter upon, in times of danger and difficulty; but only shall in few words beg of our good friend here, not to give over what he has shewn himself so ready to practise, ever since he was taken ill; but that he will still go on to pray, and will beg of all

(g) *Hof. v. 15.*

his friends and relations to pray for him, during his stay in this world, that God will forgive his sins, will purify his heart, will mortify all the remainders of vice in him, will give him his Holy Spirit to strengthen and assist him, and will send his holy angels to conduct him to glory. This is a course, my friend, that cannot fail of being highly advantageous to you ; and which you are sure can never hurt you.

Anchith. To deal freely with you, good *Theophilus*, I must acquaint you, that I do spend a good part of my time in prayer to God, both by myself, and with others ; and by the grace of God I shall persist in it, whilst I am able to speak, or can lift up my hands or eyes towards Heaven. And I do also beg of you here present, and of my other friends, to assist me with your charitable prayers to Almighty God, in my behalf.

A Prayer for Ability to pray with Fervour and Devotion.

O *H most gracious God, do thou incline my heart more and more to call upon thee, that when I can do nothing else, I may yet pray to and praise thee. Inspire my soul with devout affections, suitable to my present circumstances, that I may offer up my prayers from a truly humble and penitent, a sincere and pious mind, and with such fervour and earnestness, as that thou mayest not reject my petitions, nor withhold thy mercy from me ; but mayest hear from Heaven thy habitation, and return me a gracious answer. Hear me, O Lord ; for thy mercies are great : hear me, and all that pray for me, and our Lord Jesus Christ interceding for us all. And plenteously reward all those prayers that are put up to thee on mine account, from whomsoever they come, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Another,

Another, for Forgiveness of Sin, and a Preparation for a better State.

*I*T is thy nature and property, O Lord, always to have mercy, and to forgive. To thee appertaineth to shew pity to those who put their trust in thee. On whom canst thou more suitably place thy compassion, than on me an unworthy sinner, who am shortly to give up my account at thy great tribunal? Shut not thine ear against me now in my extremity; neither cast me away in thy wrathful indignation: but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my vileness, and truly repent me of my faults, and so make haste to help me in this world, to purge and purify me, and to perfect whatever is wanting in me, that I may ever live with thee in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Theoph. VII. Another duty, highly necessary at all times, but more especially in time of sickness, and upon the appearance of death, is, *To watch diligently against our grand enemy the devil, who is more especially industrious and vigilant, to do us a mischief at such a time as this.* It is his constant business to promote the ruin of mankind by all means in his power. Having involved himself in irrecoverable misery, wherein he has long suffer'd for his folly, and must be sure to do it through a lasting eternity; his continual study is, by all arts of fraud and treachery, to bring whomsoever he can into the same woful and helpless condition with himself; and so to get them under his dominion, that he may perpetually tyrannize over them. Hence the apostle St. Peter represents him, as *(b) going about like a furious roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*; watching all opportunities to get people into his reach; using whatever means, either to affright or amaze, or to beguile and deceive them out of their duty.

(b) 1 Pet. v. 8.

Euſeb.

Euseb. He once gave an account of himself, that he had been (i) *walking to and fro in the earth, and going up and down in it.* And the same is still his constant practice, to the end that he may work what evil he can to its inhabitants.

Theoph. He is styled by St. Paul, (k) *the prince of the power of the air*; to put us in mind of our danger from the legions of evil spirits he has at his command, as his ministers and servants; by whom he procures the death of sinners, as well as by his own more immediate devices, each way leading them on to perdition. And no wonder, if so potent, and so maliciously indefatigable an agent, be sadly prevalent over such as are not sufficiently provided against him. (l) *Plutarch*, in the life of *Dion*, notes it as *a very antient tradition*, that there a sort of wicked enchanting demons, which envy good men, and set themselves to terrify them out of their regular and virtuous conversation; to the end that, parting with their integrity and innocence, they may not be in a better condition than themselves. Very agreeably to what the Holy Scriptures teach concerning this grand enemy of souls, and his emissaries and agents, (m) *working in the children of disobedience, and leading them captive at his will.*

Euseb. It is his daily and hourly employment, to plant his engines, and lay his snares, in all places, for obstructing our salvation; and should be ours to arm ourselves against him; and, as the apostle St. James directs, so to (n) *resist him*, as that he may *flee from us*; and leave us to ourselves, to fulfil the duty required of us.

Theoph. And more especially when we come to draw near our latter end. Then our adversary looks upon himself to be, in a more peculiar manner, engag'd to try, if possible, to secure us to himself. He knows he has then but a short time; and, if he can improve that to his purpose, his work is done, and we must

(i) Job i. 7. (k) Ephes. ii. 2. (l) P. 958. (m) Ephes. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 26. (n) James iv. 7.

never hope for safety or happiness more. Hence he contrives all ways, makes use of all artifices, and employs all his methods of delusion; that he may not only retain the hold he had gotten upon any, but that he may enforce his interest in them, till it be too late for them to think of rescuing themselves out of his hand. (d) He puts on various garbs, transforms himself into every shape, and accommodates himself to all humours, that, by these means, he may enlarge his dominions, and gain new subjects to his kingdom. One while, he soothes and caresses the sinner, and lulls him on in his wonted stupidity; lest he should grow wise, and bethink himself of his dangerous state, and should use his hearty endeavours to get out of it. At another time, he discourages him by reason of the difficulty of repentance, and a truly Christian conversation; whereby to retain him still under his dominion. This man he tempts to disbelieve the doctrines of religion, and more particularly the immortality of the soul, and a life to come. That man he prevails with, tho' convinced of the certainty and duration of the other state, nevertheless to act contrary to his belief, and expose himself to all the dire vengeance, that is threatened to those who do so. Some he entices to presume upon the Divine Goodness; and forasmuch as God has declared himself to be infinitely merciful, therefore not to fear but he will at last receive them into his glory, without inquiring in what disposition they are for appearing in his presence; or what they can possibly say for themselves, when he shall call them to judgment. Thus he carries on the inconsiderate in a thoughtless security, till, at length, death seizes them, before they are in a readiness for it; and so the *door* is irretrievably *shut* against them. With others, he proceeds in a quite different manner, pressing them to despair, by reason of the multitude and heinousness of their

(d) Ὁ διάβολος μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελοι φωτός, οὐχ ἵνα ἐπαυδῇ ὅπερ καὶ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀπατησῇ, τὰς ἀνθρώπους. Cyrill. Hieros. Catech. 4.

sins; and, by this means, with-holds them from doing
 what they may, in order to a recovery. In the time
 of their health and merriment, his custom was to
 represent repentance to them as an easy work, that
 might quickly be dispatch'd at the end of their days,
 when they should come to take their bed, and be fit
 for nothing else. But now the tune is changed, and
 all his care is to persuade them, that it is too late to
 make any attempts towards the doing what they most
 certainly ought to have done sooner, whilst they had
 health, and time, and ability for it; all which being
 now greatly impair'd, there is no hope left them of
 accomplishing an acceptable repentance. *Circuit ille*
nos singulos, says (p) St. Cyprian; 'He goes about
 every one of us, and, like an enemy that has un-
 dertaken a siege, he carefully views the walls, and
 tries where the weakest place is, and whether there
 be any hope of entrance for him. To the eyes
 he proposes charming beauties, and tempting plea-
 sures; that by the sight peoples chastity may be
 ruin'd. To the ears he presents harmonious mu-
 sic, by the affecting sound whereof to soften and
 abate their Christian resolution. He provokes the
 tongue by rude and unhandsome language; moves
 the hand to fighting and murder by affronts and
 injuries; allures the deceiver by the bait of unjust
 gain. To him that will sell his soul for money, he
 offers what he sees like to prevail with him: he
 promises earthly honours, that he may deprive us
 of the heavenly; makes false shews, to rob us of
 the true riches: and whom he cannot privily de-
 ceive, he seeks to work upon by open and barefaced
 threatening; assaulting them with terrible and de-
 structive persecutions, whereby to discourage the
 faithful servants of God, to whom he is always an
 implacable and dreadful enemy; subtle in peace,
 and violent in persecution. Wherefore, says he,
 most dear brethren, let your mind be fortified and

(p) De Zelo & Livore, p. 221.

‘armed against all his assaults; whether by open threatnings, or by his more plausible and deceitful insinuations; being always as ready to resist his attacks, as he is to make them.’

Euseb. One way or other, he never fails to prosecute his malicious designs with his utmost vigour; watching day and night to take men at an advantage, to ensnare them when either least aware of, or least able to withstand, his motions.

Theoph. Which proves the reasonableness of St. Cyprian’s advice; and that the more perniciously successful any have found him in these attempts, the more carefully vigilant are they obliged to be against them for the future. Their former failures should certainly engage them not only to humble themselves under a sense of, an unfeigned sorrow for them, but moreover to make them henceforward more incessantly upon their guard; that they never be betrayed into the like for the time to come.

Euseb. If such (*q*) *who think they stand* most securely, are nevertheless to *take heed, lest they fall* by the surprise of a sudden, or the violence of a strong temptation; how much more ought those to do it, whose former falls have given them too sad evidence of their own weakness!

Theoph. And so should those, who find themselves at any time less disposed than usual, to bear up against him. And, accordingly, his peculiar diligence at the approach of our latter end calls then upon all for a more especial regard to his wiles, whereby to defend themselves against him. You must then be sure, as far as consistent with your weak condition, to watch and pray against him, and to implore a singular measure of the Divine assistance, for carrying you thro’ your last agonies with success and conquest; that you may not unhappily lose the reward of all your former pains, and meet with a dreadful disappointment, and be everlastingly condemn’d, when you expected,

(*q*) 1 Cor. x. 12.

on

on the contrary, to receive a crown of glory, that *fadeth not away*. What (r) St. Jerom affirms is most certainly true, *Nullus dies tutus periculo proximus*; there is no time of thinking yourself safe whilst in the neighbourhood of danger. And, forasmuch the greater the danger is, the farther you are from safety, the more watchful ought you undoubtedly to be at such a time.

Anchith. I am fully convinced I ought to be so; but my sickness so discomposes my thoughts, that I can do nothing as I should. Wherefore I beseech Almighty God to take pity upon me; either to help my infirmity, or graciously to accept of such imperfect duties as that will allow me to perform.

A Prayer for Defence against the Assaults of the Devil.

A Lmighty God, and most merciful Father, whose I am, and to whom all my services are due; to thee I now address myself, beseeching thee to bow thine ear, and hearken to me in this my necessity. O look upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy Name. Consider my declining helpless condition; and be thou my mighty Saviour and Deliverer. As my time is short, and my strength little, so it is my great unhappiness to have a powerful and a subtle, as well as a desperately malicious adversary, continually lying in wait for my destruction. And, without thy help, I must inevitably perish. I were everlastingly undone, were it not that thy strength is made perfect in weakness; and thou hast graciously promis'd to sustain those who cast their burden upon thee. This I now desire to do, in an humble confidence, that thou wilt not reject me when I sue to thee for safety. Enable me so to resist the devil, that he may flee from me, and not go on to attempt my ruin: or, if he do, yet suffer him not to succeed in his endeavours; but, of

(r) Proem. ad Pammach. in Lib. 2. Commentar. in Amos.

thy great mercy, frustrate his designs, and defeat all his wiles and stratagems, that he may not prevail against me, and draw me aside into the ways of sin. Though he be powerful, thy Holy Spirit is incomparably more powerful; let that good Spirit conduct me safely, in spite of all the other's devices for my ruin. Deliver me, O my God, deliver me in thy righteousness; and let no temptation be too strong for me. Carry me victoriously through whatsoever conflicts or calamities may befall me, either now, or at the hour of death. This I beg for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

Another, for Acceptance with Almighty God.

O Merciful and gracious Lord God, who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sins, and live; and who art always more ready to hear, than we to pray; and art wont to give more than we desire or deserve; deal not with me according to my own unworthiness, but according to the multitude of thy mercies. Let not my defective services be displeasing in thy sight. Cast me not off, when I endeavour to approve myself to thee; though with a great mixture of weakness and imperfection. Whilst I continue here obnoxious to sin, and always encompass'd with temptations to it, I am continually adding to the vast heap of my offences; and even my most holy things are polluted and defiled. Assist me by thy grace and Holy Spirit, that I may serve thee more completely for the little time of my life that yet remains, than I have done hitherto. When I offer up my petitions to thee, inspire my soul with such devout affections, as become a guilty creature before his highly offended Creator. And at all other times let a sense of thy Divine presence overawe my mind, that I may study to the utmost to please thee; being fully resolved to yield to no motions to the contrary, how pressing soever. And do thou condescend to cast an eye of pity towards me, and to accept

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of such an imperfect obedience as I am capable of performing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another, for the Direction of God's Spirit.

O God, forasmuch as without thee I am not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule my heart, that he may be to me a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and might, a Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, and may daily increase in me thy manifold gifts of grace. Let him be my Guide to direct me in the way of righteousness, my Guard to preserve me from the fury of the enemy, and my Shield to beat back all his darts. And, forasmuch as the frailty of man, without thee, cannot but fall; keep me ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable to my salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Euseb. I doubt we have tir'd *Anchithanes*.

Theoph. I will only beg leave to mention one other duty, if he can have patience to hear it, and so shall bid him *adieu* for this time.

Anchith. I beseech you take your own time.

Theoph. VIII. Then, in the last place, *The sick man* must shew himself perfectly resigned to the Divine disposal. I do not say he must not murmur at God's dealings with him, how disagreeable soever to flesh and blood; because this were such excessive undutifulness and ingratitude together, as no good man can suffer himself to be guilty of: but he must farther renounce his own most natural desires, whensoever they are not thoroughly conformable to what Almighty God decrees concerning him. Otherwise, the very heathens will rise up in judgment against him, and will condemn him in a high degree; particularly (*s*) *Epietetus*, who sticks not to profess concerning himself, that he had brought his mind into a perfect subjection to the

(*s*) Arr. *Epietet.* l. 3. c. 26.

Divine will. 'I have learned, *says he*, to conform
 ' my will to God ; insomuch that would he have
 ' me sick, I would be so ; would he have me attempt
 ' any thing, I am ready to do it ; would he have
 ' me desire any thing, I am willing to desire it ;
 ' would he have me acquire any thing, I rejoice to
 ' set about it ; would he not have me to do it, neither
 ' am I for it ; would he have me to die, I do not
 ' refuse it.' In like manner, *(t)* *Socrates*, being inform'd
 by *Crito*, that he was to die the next day, return'd
 this answer, as a testimony of his ready submission
 to the determination of Providence concerning him ;
 Ἀλλ', ὡς Κρίτων, τύχη ἀγαθὴ εἰ ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ
 ἔσω. *It is very well, O Crito ; and, since it pleases the gods,*
so let it be. And *(u)* *Seneca* passes a severe censure
 upon those who are not willing to part with their life,
 or whatsoever other blessings they have receiv'd from
 God, whensoever he thinks fit to call for it : ' He,
 ' *says he*, is unjust, who will not leave the ordering
 ' of the gift to the will of the giver ; and he is cove-
 ' tous, who is not as well pleased with his having re-
 ' ceiv'd a favour, as he is disturb'd at the loss of it.'

Euseb. To the same purpose, likewise, speaks the
 Emperor *Antoninus* ; freely owning, that *(x)* *Provi-*
dence is clearly seen in the administration of the world ;
and hence exhorting not to die repining, but easy, and
well pleased, and with thankfulness to the gods. And,
 at another time, he professes his veneration for the
 Governor of the world, and his trust and confi-
 dence in him. *(y)* Σέβω, καὶ εὐσεβῶ, καὶ θαρρῶ τῷ διοικῶντι.
 ' I adore the Orderer of all things, and firmly and
 ' stedfastly rely upon him ; *(z)* *and exhorts others,*
 ' quietly to expect their dissolution, whether by way
 ' of extinction or translation ; and, in the mean time,
 ' to worship and praise the gods ; to do good to
 ' men ; to bear with them, and to refrain from make-
 ' ing them any ill returns ; and to remember, that

(t) Plat. in Crit. *(u)* De Consolat. ad Polyb. c. 29. *(x)* Εὐ-
 χαριστὸν, l. 1. §. ult. *(y)* lb. l. 6. §. 8. *(z)* lb. l. 5. §. 25.

those things which are from without, and depend neither upon their own bodies or souls, are neither theirs, nor at their disposal. *And again, says he,* (a) He determines the end of thy acting here, who was formerly the cause of thy being, and is now of thy dissolution; neither of which is thine own doing. Wherefore be sure to depart hence well pleased; for he that dismisses thee, is so.

Theoph. If the light of nature could teach such a submission to Almighty God, how much more should the doctrines of the Gospel incline us all to a ready compliance with whatsoever is well pleasing to him! And the sick man therefore would do well, to recollect that God's will is not only supreme, absolute, and independent, but moreover is infinitely righteous and wise; that he understands all things, and knows the tendencies, and foresees the events of them, and what good or hurt there is in them; and, consequently, all his dispensations towards any of us must be really best in themselves, though we, at present, may not apprehend them to be so.

Euseb. He might consider also, how much (b) *the day of one's death is better than the day of his birth*; that, as has been (c) already observed, this life is full of misery and trouble, and in no wise to be compared with the inestimable joys and glories, the unconceivable bliss and felicity, of the other; that he is here but as a stranger and a pilgrim upon a journey, and that no pleasant one, towards a better country; but Heaven is his end, his home, his Father's house, where alone he can be at rest, and where he will meet with the completest happiness in all respects; that here he is in spiritual thralldom, liable to manifold temptations; in a sort of servitude to divers lusts and pleasures, which he cannot defend himself against, without continual care and watchfulness; but there he will be absolutely free, and reign in splendor and majesty for ever and ever.

(a) Εἰς αὐτόν, 1. 12. §. ult. (b) Eccles. vii. 1. (c) P. 260, &c.
Theoph.

Theoph. No doubt, these considerations must raise up the mind of a good man, above all he can meet with here below ; and will make him not unwilling to be translated into that *far better* state. The traveller is never sorry, that he has reach'd the end of his journey, and is now at liberty to enjoy himself, and his friends. The labourer is glad, when his work is over that he may retire, and take his rest. The mariner is full of joy, when he sees his port ; and hastens with all the speed he can to get into it. The soldier is ready enough to betake himself to the refreshment of his winter's ease, when tired with the drudgery and danger of the summer's campaign. And shall not the Christian be as desirous of attaining his end, and as much disposed to bless himself in the attainment of it ? When he is come to the utmost term of his pilgrimage ; has *fought the good fight* of faith, and *finished his course* with integrity, and a good conscience ; has laboured his appointed time in his Heavenly Father's vineyard ; has been long tossed about in this world, as upon a tempestuous sea ; and now sees before him a quiet and settled habitation, *an immortal crown of glory*, a pleasant land, and a most exceedingly valuable recompence of reward, *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for him* ; what should make him fond of tarrying any longer here ?

Euseb. To meet with crosses and vexation, to be subject to losses and disappointments, to be sick and die, is but the common fate of this mortal life ; and what the wisest and most honourable, and the richest and most potent Kings and emperors, as well as their meanest subjects, are liable to ; and it is a very unreasonable thing, for a prisoner to be so in love with his confinement, a captive with his chains, or a slave with his drudgery and ill usage, as not readily to accept of a deliverance, when offered freely ; and without any other inconvenience, than quitting his station,
and

and removing at a distance from the cause of all his dissatisfactions and complaints.

Theoph. The greatest and the best of Princes are no more exempt from natural infirmities, and outward casualties and accidents, than common people. They must meet with opposition; and disobedience, and treachery, and conspiracies, above the rate of others; and must be ill, and in pain, and give up the ghost when their time comes, no less than the basest of their vassals. Even our blessed Lord, the Son of God himself; was not only to die, but to die a painful, ignominious, and accursed death upon the cross. And can any pretend to be his disciples, and refuse to be conformed to his example? It would certainly become us all, to set him before us as a pattern for our pious imitation; and to beg, that the Will of God may be accomplish'd in us, with the same submission that he did; and not think ourselves too good to *drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with*; or even to die a far easier death than he died. So that the sick man can never hope to excuse himself, if he does not take care to bring all his longings and desires into subjection to the all-wise determinations of God concerning him; whether for prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, life or death: the doing which will not only be an acceptable service to Almighty God, and a just acknowledgment of his sovereignty and dominion; but will be a great ease to his own mind, and the surest method he can take to cure all those tormenting fears of death, to which he would otherwise be liable. This will bring him to a composedness of thoughts under all events; that whatever happens, he will never be disturbed at it to any great degree; and so he will be easy both living and dying; and in the readier way to be for ever happy, when he comes into the other world.

Anchit. Oh, how happy were I, if I could once thoroughly conquer myself in this respect, so as to
leave

leave it intirely to Almighty God to choose for me! This I have heartily endeavoured, and do yet, and will endeavour, as long as breath is left in me; and will beg of God to help my infirmities, and enable me to do it as I ought; as likewise, that whenever he takes me hence, he will take me to himself.

A Prayer for an intire Resignation to the Divine Will.

GRANT me, O Lord, a ready and constant submission to thy most holy, most just, and righteous Will, that whatever becomes of me, I may always look up to thee, as the Supreme Author of all events; may see thy hand in every thing that befalls me; and may comfort myself to think, that, in all my troubles and difficulties, I have yet a good and gracious God to take care of me. It is unspeakable love in thee, to concern thyself for us poor mortals, sinful dust and ashes: yet, since thou dost not disdain to charge thy good Providence with us, and our affairs, never suffer any of us, I beseech thee, to make so ill use of thy condescension, as to shew ourselves dissatisfied at any of thy most adverse dispensations towards us; but to believe they will certainly turn to our advantage, if we be disposed to receive them as we ought. Be with me in particular, and so guide and over-rule all my desires, that they may be intirely subject to thy determination; that I may take patiently all thou layest upon me; and whether thou designest me for life or death, this or the other world, I may rest assured, that thou knowest how to chuse for me, far better than I can for myself; and may be easy and contented in whatever condition, praying, after the example of our blessed Lord, Not my will, but thine be done. Grant this, O Father, for the sake of the same thy Son our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another,

Another, for an easy Departure hence.

AND may it seem good in thy sight, O gracious Lord, to soften the pains of my present sickness, and approaching agonies, and to grant me a gentle passage through the gate of death. Thou knowest the weakness and frailty of human nature: Oh, that it may please thee to lay no heavier load upon me, than is necessary for me! but grant me a favourable and happy departure out of this miserable world, that I may die with a quiet mind, and a peaceful conscience, and no excessive nor lasting bodily pains. This my own fears press me to beg of thee, and I do it accordingly; but yet with all submission to thy most holy Will, which I pray may be done, tho' thou shouldest have determined otherwise concerning me. Only then I beseech thee to furnish me with patience, and support me with spiritual comforts, and not suffer my ghostly enemy to terrify and molest me. And the nearer I come to my dissolution, the more plentifully do thou manifest thy mercy towards me, through Jesus Christ my dear Redeemer, and only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another, for a Translation into a better State.

AND, when I take leave of this earthly body, receive me, I beg, into thy favour. Give thy holy angels charge over me, to conduct me safe into thy kingdom, and place me amongst the saints in light, in the bosom of Jesus. Watch over me for good; take my soul unto thyself, washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ. And grant, at length, to this decaying body, a blessed resurrection, and reunion to its former companion, that both soul and body may be glorified together; and that I may everlastingly praise and magnify thy holy Name, sounding forth eternal hallelujahs, and saying with those in the Apocalypse, **BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE TO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER.** Amen.

Theoph.

Theoph. I make no question, *Anchithanes*, but you really labour after the blessed frame of mind, and the happy translation hence, you so heartily pray for. But we must now take our leaves of you; and I beseech Almighty God to send you a quiet night, and to have you always in his protection, whether living or dying.

Euseb. We ought, indeed, to be going; but that I see *Theodorus* coming, and it will be fit to stay and join with him in prayer for our worthy friend.

Anchith. I beg this piece of friendship of you both; for I have great need of the prayers of all my friends.

Theod. Peace be to this house, and all that dwell in it.

Theoph. We were just leaving *Anchithanes* to his rest, having sufficiently tired him with a long visit; but, seeing you coming, we resolved to tarry a little longer, and offer up our prayers with you on his behalf, for his recovery, if it seem good to the Divine Wisdom; or else for his admission into eternal happiness.

Theod. Then, if you please, we will begin.

Theoph. As soon as you please, *Theodorus*; for it is more than time we were gone.

Theod. I will not keep you any longer.

Prayers being ended, the others withdraw, leaving Theodorus alone with Anchithanes; who, after a little seasonable and pious advice, left him too.

The End of the Fifth VISIT.

The Sixth VISIT.

Euseb. **T***imotheus* and *Philogeiton*, you come very seasonably. I was just going to call upon *Theophilus*, that we might make good our promise to *Anchithanes*, at whose house we expected to meet you.

Timotheus.

Timotheus. We are ready to attend you.

Euseb. Here *Theophilus* is coming, and another with him.

Theoph. Well met, Sirs. Here is a messenger from *Anchilbanes*, to acquaint me, that he is much changed since yesterday, and seems to be very near his end.

Timoth. Then, if you please, let us lose no time, that we do not come too late.

Theoph. He was very weak, and his spirits low and faint, yesterday; and, if he be much altered since, he cannot be expected to last long; so that, if we would hope to do him any service, we ought to make what haste we can.

Philog. Pray let us. And if we should not be able to do him any kindness, yet it will be a considerable kindness to ourselves, to behold a spectacle of mortality; that will naturally put us in mind of our own frailty, and the uncertainty of this transitory life.

Theoph. It is no small piece of wisdom to number our days aright. And nothing tends more to put us upon this, than to see others, of the like frame and constitution with ourselves, struggling for breath, and at length giving up the ghost.

Timoth. This must put us upon reflecting what is like to become of us, when we leave this world, and follow them; and, by consequence, upon preparing for our change, which may possibly be much nearer to some or all of us, than we apprehend.

Euseb. We cannot be too sensible of the reason we all have to look forward to another life, and to get our souls in a readiness for death, which is the only passage into it; and which if it should seize us unprepared, we must look to have the door eternally shut against us.

Serv. Will you please to walk in? My master is extremely weak; and, if you had stay'd a little longer, you would hardly have found him alive.

Theoph.

Theoph. We came to that end; and I pray God we may find him in a condition to be discoursed with.

Serv. His understanding is sound and well, but his spirits sink apace, so that it is but little you can expect him to say.

Theoph. *Anchithanes*, we are come now as we promised. Pray how are you to-day?

Anchith. Weak, very weak.

Euseb. God be thanked, you are yet alive; and like to be happy, I trust, either in this, or the other world.

Anchith. As it shall please God. I am in his hand; and he orders all things, and knows what is best for me: and whatsoever he shall determine concerning me, I shall think best.

Timoth. You judge, and speak, as becomes a good Christian. What Almighty God does, being always the effect of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, is always best. And it is therefore by much a prouder and safer course, to give ourselves up to his disposal, than to chuse for ourselves, whatever the case be.

Anchith. I am abundantly satisfied it is: and this makes me very easy. And, I thank God, I do most heartily say for myself, as *Eli* did, upon *Samuel's* heavy message to him; (1) *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.* I am coming, O my God: prepare me, I beseech thee, for the everlasting enjoyment of thee; that I may live with thee for ever, and eternally found forth thy praises.

Philog. I trust in God you will.

Anchith. I would gladly take leave of my family, and leave some parting advice with them, before I am taken from them; and, to that end, have sent for them in. But I find I must rest awhile, I am so much spent with that little I have now said.

Theoph. Very well moved! this being a time when such advice is like to make the deepest impression upon them, and may, not improbably, be of everlasting advantage to them.

(1) 1 Sam. iii, 18.

Euseb. It is commonly observed, that the words of dying persons have a particular regard paid to them, above any thing they had said at other times.

Theoph. And there are divers reasons for it. For if a man be ever serious, and in earnest, he will be so then; and if those he speaks to are ever disposed to hearken to, and remember what he says, this is the time, when they are just parting, and can hope for no farther communication with him; when they are desirous of something to remember him by, and of something wherein to shew their respect to his memory; when his words are a sort of legacies to those that hear them, and they think themselves oblig'd, accordingly, presently to resolve to fulfil the will of the dead; and the sense they then have, above other times, of their own mortality, makes them serious and sincere in their resolutions.

Euseb. For these reasons I cannot wholly dislike *Andrithanes's* design: but I think, however, he would do well to have a regard to his own want of strength, and be as short as he can.

Theoph. That would be adviseable; that he prejudice not himself by too much speaking: for I find he is very weak.

Andrith. In truth I am so; and will therefore follow your advice.

To his wife. ' You see, my dearest wife, in what a condition I lie here, looking continually to be taken from thee, my loving and dear companion; and I trust in God, it is in order to a better state, a state of incomparable bliss, and eternal happiness. Wherefore I beg of thee, not to be grieved upon my account. I have run my race, have finished my years allotted me upon earth; and do willingly quit this life, in obedience to the Divine Will, and in hope of those inestimable rewards, which are promis'd by the Gospel to all who duly labour after them. Neither be thou too solicitous for thyself, and our dear children; for thou knowest very well, that

A a

' Almighty

' Almighty God has promis'd to take a particular care
 ' of (d) *the fatherless and widow*, and thou needest not
 ' doubt but he will make good his word to thee, if
 ' thou stedfastly puttest thy trust in him. There is
 ' nothing, I find, so hard for me to part with, as with
 ' thee, my dear, dear wife; however, since it is God's
 ' Will, I willingly leave thee. But yet I do it with a
 ' firm persuasion, that thou wilt so proceed to order
 ' thy life in the fear of God, that we may meet
 ' again, and be infinitely happy in the other world
 ' for evermore. Thou hast been a very kind and lov-
 ' ing wife to me, and I have endeavoured not to be
 ' wanting in return of affection to thee. But if I have
 ' fail'd in my duty, I heartily beg pardon for it. Take
 ' care of thyself, that thou set the Lord always be-
 ' fore thee, and walk always as in his sight, and as re-
 ' membring the account thou must give to him at the
 ' last day. Take care of my children, to instruct them
 ' in their duty, and to press them to observe it. Be a
 ' kind mistress to thy servants; and set thyself, both
 ' to the children and them, a pattern of good works;
 ' that so thou mayest have obedient children, and
 ' faithful and orderly servants; mayest be belov'd of
 ' God, and all good Christians; and that, thro' the
 ' mercy of God, and our blessed Saviour's merits and
 ' mediation, we may have a joyful meeting in a happy
 ' eternity.

To his children. ' God Almighty bless you all, my
 ' dear children, and make you his faithful and obe-
 ' dient servants. Remember the advice of your dy-
 ' ing father; observe it now, and keep it in mind
 ' when I am gone. Be sure to serve and please God;
 ' get yourselves well instructed in your religion.
 ' And as you are happily members of the best consti-
 ' tuted church now in the world, be sure to continue
 ' always so, believing its doctrines, and following its
 ' directions. See that ye stedfastly retain the faith
 ' taught in it from the Holy Scriptures, and embraced

and maintain'd through all the first and purest ages of Christianity; and let your practice always be accordingly. Remember God always sees you, and do nothing that you would not have him privy to, or which you shall wish you had not done, when ye shall come at the last day to give up your accounts to him; nor to leave undone, what you shall then wish you had performed. Be mindful of your duty to him, and he will be mindful of you, will take you into his protection, and will be an infinitely better Father to you, than I could ever be. Fear him; love him; honour him; serve him; never omit your prayers to him; praise him for all his benefits; and in all things study to approve yourselves to him. Be constant in reading the holy scriptures; and observe well what you read, to treasure it up in your minds, and practise it in your lives. Avoid idleness, and bad company; and always associate yourselves with those that are good. Put your trust always in God; and undertake nothing of any moment, without first begging his blessing upon it. Be sure never to swear in your conversation; nor to tell lyes, upon whatever account. Be dutiful and loving to your kind and tender mother. Pray for her. Honour her for God's sake, who has requir'd it of you; for my sake, who am now leaving you; and for your own sake, that she may not be forced at the last great day, to appear as a witness against you, and accuse you of disobedience; and that God may bless you with a long and happy life upon earth, and with eternal bliss and felicity in heaven. And when ye come into the world, be just and honest in all your dealings; courteous and obliging to all; helpful and charitable to all that need it; respectful to your superiors; and thankful for any kindnesses that are done you. Shun all excess in meat and drink, especially in the latter. Moderate your passions; forgive injuries; love your enemies; and do to all, as ye would they should do to you. Consider

‘ it is but a little time you have to live here, and
 ‘ let it therefore be your daily care to provide for a
 ‘ better and more lasting state. Be good, and do
 ‘ your duty, in all respects; and then God will love;
 ‘ and as I said before, will be the best of fathers to
 ‘ you.

To his servants. ‘ The time of my departure be-
 ‘ ing now at hand, I sent for you, to take my leave
 ‘ of you, and to give you my parting advice, in hope
 ‘ you will attend to it, and remember and practise it.
 ‘ I thank you for the good services ye have done me.
 ‘ And I now desire, that so long as any of you tarry
 ‘ here, ye will behave yourselves in the same manner
 ‘ towards your mistress. Be faithful and diligent in
 ‘ your service. (e) *Obey her, as the Apostle requires;*
 ‘ *not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of*
 ‘ *heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do for her, do*
 ‘ *it heartily, as your Duty to the Lord, and not to her*
 ‘ *only; knowing that, for so doing, ye shall receive of the*
 ‘ *Lord the reward of your labours, the inheritance of the*
 ‘ *sons of God; for in this ye serve the Lord Christ.* Flee
 ‘ all stubbornness, answering again, lyes, pilfering,
 ‘ wastefulness, idleness, negligence, breach of trust,
 ‘ drunkenness, fornication, vain oaths, bad company,
 ‘ or whatever is unbecoming the profession of Christi-
 ‘ anity. Live always as in the sight of God; *let him*
 ‘ *be your fear, and let him be your dread;* and be sure,
 ‘ above all things, never knowingly to offend him,
 ‘ that he may recompense you in part here, and more
 ‘ abundantly hereafter.’ *I am very faint.*

Theoph. No wonder; for you have spoke beyond
 your strength.

Anchith. I find I have. And yet I must proceed, to
 thank you all, my good friends, for all your kindness
 to me; for which I beseech Almighty God to reward
 you plentifully; and *Theodorus* too, to whom pray give
 my parting thanks. I can say no more. I am going.
 I pray God bless us all, and grant us a happy meeting

(e) Col. iii. 22, 23, 24.

in Heaven. And so, dearest wife, and all here present, adieu. Pray to God for me, when I can no longer pray for myself.

Timoth. He seems to be going to sleep.

Theoph. He is quite spent, and has need of rest; the Lord grant him it.

Euseb. And when he shall be taken hence, the Lord grant him eternal rest.

All of them. Amen.

Theoph. What a happiness it is to die in the fear of God, and as becomes a good Christian! Let us remember, and never forget it, that death is, in this case, a deliverance from all our cares and troubles, fears and inquietudes, losses and disappointments, from all pain and sickness, and from all sin and wickedness; and a translation into the utmost happiness we are capable of enjoying, the presence and fruition of God, the society of our blessed Saviour, of the blessed angels, and the saints of all ages, and all those unconceivable rewards, which are promised in the Gospel to such as believe in Christ, and serve and obey him.

Euseb. This is a happiness indeed! and in this happy state we may justly expect our good friend will be in a very little time, through the merits and mediation of Christ.

Timoth. And what a comfort must it be to his dearest friends, that he shall be gone only into that place of glory, whither we all desire and hope to come in God's due time!

Philog. (f) *Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*, says the royal psalmist. And it is well said by the author of the book of *Wisdom*, to the same purpose: (g) *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; and their departure was taken for misery; and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punish'd in the sight of men; yet is their hope full*

(f) Psal cxvi. 15.

(g) Wisd. iii. 1, &c.

of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt-offering. And again, (b) *The righteous live for evermore, their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown, from the Lord's hand; for with his right-hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them.*

Theoph. Death is a dark passage, but which brings to the land of light and glory; a night that ends in eternal day; a deliverance from all evil, and the only entrance into everlasting happiness. I trust it will be so to good *Anchithanes*; and I beseech Almighty God it may; and to all of us, when our time shall come.

Euseb. God grant it to him, and all of us.

Timoth. Amen, Amen.

Theoph. Let us therefore prepare ourselves for it, being stedfast and unmoveable; always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know, that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Philog. This it highly concerns us all to be; and I hope we shall none of us neglect it, since we know of what dreadful consequence such neglect will certainly prove.

Timoth. He begins to stir: see if he be not awake.

Theoph. How do you find yourself now, *Anchithanes*? He makes no answer; and, by his looks, I question whether he will ever awake more in this world. For he seems to me to be in the agony of death. Pray, *Philogeiton*, will you be so kind as to step for *Theodorus*, and beg of him to come, with all the speed he can, to finish his kind offices for this good man, by praying for him now at his departure?

Philog. I go, Sir; and will make all the haste I can.

Timoth. Hold, neighbour; you need not give yourself the trouble; for *Theodorus* is coming up the stairs.

(b) *Wisd. v. 15, 16.*

Theod.

Theod. Pray how does *Anchitbanes*? I suppose drawing to his latter end.

Euseb. He is so very near it, that we were just sending to intreat your assistance, that you would please to pray for him once more. And it is the last trouble he is like to give you, till you come to place him in *his long home*.

Theod. If you please then, we will begin.

Theoph. He seems to be just at the point of death; so that you will hardly have time for more than the recommendatory collect.

Theod. If you think so, I will use that.

The Recommendatory Collect.

O Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons; we humbly commend the soul of this thy servant, our dear brother, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour; most humbly beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight: Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, thro' the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure, and without spot, before thee. And teach us, who survive, in this, and other like daily spectacles of mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord. Amen.

Euseb. Almighty God seems to have heard our prayers, and taken him to himself.

Theod. Is he quite dead?

Timoth. Yes, Sir, he is.

Theod. He is delivered out of a miserable, troublesome world; and, I doubt not, is in happiness. And I pray God prepare us all to follow him, that when our time shall come, we may die as quietly and christianly as he has done, and be for ever happy, as I trust he is.

Theoph. May we lay this instance of our mortality to heart, and study to make a good improvement of it.

Euseb. That so we may *die the death of the righteous*, and our *last end may be like his*.

Theod. I will follow the poor afflicted gentlewoman, and try to comfort her under this her sad loss; which I fear lies heavy upon her, considering how loving and tender a husband she has parted with.

Theoph. Be pleased to assure her, we are all partakers in her affliction; and do beseech Almighty God to support her under it, and to sanctify it to her.

Euseb. We can do no service, I believe, by staying.

Timoth. And I shall be wanted at home.

Theoph. Therefore we had best be going.

Philog. If you please.

Theoph. Who would have thought but three weeks since, that our good friend should have been taken from us by this time? But so it has pleased God, who does nothing but with the greatest wisdom and equity, and whose Will therefore is always best.

Philog. This shews how little dependence there is upon this life, even when in our perfectest health and greatest strength.

Timoth. We see, by this instance, how easily the most (i) athletic constitution is overcome by sickness; and that, were we not liable to multitudes of outward unforeseen accidents, besides many inward latent distempers, each of which may easily dispatch us, were we not liable to these quicker means of sending us out of the world, yet could we have no security of our lives, when we see one ready to be laid in the earth, who, not many days since, was, to all appearance, as strong and healthy.

(i) Quis est tam stultus (quamvis sit adolescens) cui sit exploratum, se ad vesperam esse victurum? *Cic. de Senect.*

and

and as like to live to a good old age, as any one of us. God grant we may all make a good use of it. But my way lies here.

Philog. And mine too. So that we must both beg your excuse, that we do not wait upon you farther.

Theoph. I heartily wish you a good night, neighbours; and thank you for your good company hither.

Euseb. A good night to you both, after this mournful providence. God send us a happy meeting; where death shall be no more.

Theoph. Death indeed were a very melancholick scene, did it put an end to our being. But it is the great benefit of Christianity, and the good man finds it a singular defence against the fear of death, that *(k)* life and immortality is brought to light by the Gospel.

Euseb. It is now more evident and indisputable than it was before. But the world had a notion of it before; the *Jews* were taught it, and the *Gentiles* had an expectation of a future state.

Theoph. The *Jews*, it is true, were taught to expect another life after this; as it is plain from the last words of *Ecclesiastes*: *(l)* Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; *לֵאמֹר כֹּל הָאָדָם* for this is the whole of man, or every man; or, as the *Chaldee* paraphrast renders it, This ought to be every man's way; to the same purpose with our *English* translation, This is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work to judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. As likewise from several passages in the book of *(m)* *Wisdom*, and *(n)* the son of *Sirach*, and from the relation of the mother and her seven children, in the story of the *(o)* *Maccabees*, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain the better resurrection. And the *Gentiles* too had some notions of another life, and of its rewards and punishments; as appears,

(k) 2 Tim. i. 10. *(l)* Eccles. xii. 13, 14. *(m)* Wisd. iii. 1, &c. and v. 15, 16. *(n)* Eccles. xviii. 10. and xxi. 2. 10. and xli. 10. *(o)* 2 Macc. vii. 1—36.

not only from the fictions of the poets, accommodated to the more usual opinion in this respect; but from divers sayings of their graver and more serious philosophers, (*p*) *Socrates*, (*q*) *Cato*, (*r*) *Tully*, (*s*) and others. Yet all the intimation, not only these, but the *Jews* also, had of a future state, were obscure and unsatisfactory, in comparison of the far clearer revelations of the Gospel in this respect. So that, however any, before our Saviour's incarnation, might be tempted to suspect, lest their souls should live no longer, when once the body is dead; those Christians must be wilfully blind, that shall suffer themselves now in the least to doubt of it.

Euseb. This is undeniably manifest, from our Saviour's life, and sufferings, and death; which had all been useless, and to no purpose, if there were to be no other life after this.

Theoph. True. He came to redeem us from eternal torments, and to purchase for us eternal life. And therefore, says *St. John*, (*t*) *This is the record, that he hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.*

Euseb. This is moreover indisputably evident from those words of our Saviour, which are the conclusion of the account he gives us of the last judgment; (*u*) *These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*

Euseb. There are also divers other most express declarations to this purpose in the New Testament.

Theoph. Yes, a great many. Our blessed Saviour promises, that they (*x*) *who have forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or*

(*p*) *Plat. Socrat. Apol. c. 21, 22. & Phæd. c. 7. & 14, &c.*
Cic. de Amicitia. (*q*) *Cic. de Senect.* (*r*) *Ibid.* (*s*) *Diog. Laert. in Vit. Thaletis.* *Cic. de Amic. Clem. Alex. Strom.*
l. 1. p. 303. & l. 5. p. 548. *Lactant. Instit. l. 7. c. 7.*
Macrobi. Somn. Scip. l. 2. c. 13. *Porphyrii Sentent. (t) 1 John*
v. 11, 12. (u) Matth. xxv. 46. (x) Matth. xix. 29.

children, or lands, for his name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. As he had, but a little before, in the same chapter, given this advice to the young man, who came to him for direction in order to salvation ; (y) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* And that this life was such as was to endure for evermore, appears from the question put, to the verse immediately foregoing ; (z) *Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ?* For tho' our Saviour mentions only life in general, yet his answer being given in relation to the preceding question, the life here spoken of must be the same in both verses ; and by consequence the latter, as well as the former, must mean *eternal life*. Consonantly whereto, St. Paul, speaking of our Saviour's coming to judge the world, expresses himself in this manner : (a) *The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the angel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we, not for a little time, or a set number of years, but EVER, be with the Lord.* And St. Peter, exhorting the elders, whether bishops or presbyters, carefully to feed the flock of Christ, enforces his exhortation with this encouraging prospect ; namely, that (b) *When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away ;* and which must therefore last for ever and ever. And many other places there are to the same effect in the New Testament, which I forbear to recite.

Euseb. You need not ; for these are so clear and full to the purpose, that nothing can be more.

Theoph. But this is not all our happiness ; but our bodies shall also be raised again at the end of the world, and reunited to their former souls, that so the whole man may glorify God, and be for ever happy with him.

(y) Matth. xix. 17. (z) Ver. 16. (a) 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. (y) 1 Pet. v. 4.

Euseb.

Euseb. St. Paul delivers it, not only as a certain, but as a known and undoubted truth, (c) *We know*, says he, *that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Theoph. And at another time he declares it to be the hope and expectation, and the great encouragement, of Christians, to have their bodies not only raised, but refined and purified, that they may be fit receptacles for glorified souls, (d) *We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, by the mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.*

Euseb. How comfortable is this !

Theoph. A mighty comfort certainly ! to think, that tho' we die, and have our bodies laid in the grave, they shall not always remain there ; but we shall be (e) *like God* in our souls, and have our (f) bodies fashioned like our blessed Saviour's glorified body ; and so shall be infinitely more happy, than we can at present express or conceive.

Euseb. God grant it to you and me.

Theoph. So I pray too, But yet never doubt it, if we be but qualified for so great and inestimable a blessedness. And let this therefore be our continual care, to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling ; to lay up to ourselves treasures in Heaven, and to pass the time of our sojourning here, in all holy conversation and godliness*, that so we may not only easily and readily leave this life, whenever we shall be called out of it, but dying in the faith and fear of God, may have an entrance ministred unto us abundantly, into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Euseb. Amen.

Theoph. (g) *And the very God of peace sanctify us wholly : and, I pray God, our whole spirit, and soul, and*

(c) 2 Cor. v. 1. (d) Phil. iii. 20, 21. (e) 1 John iii. 2.
(f) Phil. iii. 21. (g) 1 Thess. v. 23.

body,

body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Euseb. Amen.

Theoph. We have now done all the service we can to our good neighbour, now with God; unless it be to attend his body to the grave: and, I presume, you will not fail of doing that last office for him.

Euseb. God willing, I shall be there.

Theoph. Though we are forbid to *(b)* *sorrow as men without hope, for them that sleep in Christ*; yet a decent regard to the remains of our deceased friends is what has been always thought requisite. *(i)* *Man, saith Solomon, goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.* And I would not be wanting to pay this last respect to our good neighbour; and to join with the congregation, in giving thanks, for that it hath pleased God to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; and beseeching that, of his gracious goodness, it may please him shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom; that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Theoph. And may the Almighty vouchsafe to hear you, and all of us; and to grant, that we may meet with good *Anchithanes* in the kingdom of Heaven, and be for ever happy with him, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ.

Euseb. Amen.

Theoph. I heartily thank you, *Eusebius*, for your good company; and I wish you a good night.

Euseb. I humbly thank you, *Theophilus*, for the benefit I have had by your conversation; and I wish you also a good night.

(b) 1 Thes. iv. 13.

(i) Eccles. xii. 5.

The End of the last VISIT.

SOME FEW
MEDITATIONS

USEFUL at all TIMES,

But more especially in the Time of

SICKNESS :

Whereby to excite to the more

Diligent Preparation for DEATH.

Commune with your own heart in your chamber, and be still. Psal. iv. 4.

Meditatio siquidem parit Scientiam : Scientia Compunctionem ; Compunctio Devotionem : Devotio perficit Orationem.

B. August. de Spiritu & Anima, c. 50.

SOME FEW

MEDITATIONS

USEFUL at all TIMES,

But more especially in the Time of

SICKNESS :

Whereby to excite to the more

Diligent Preparation for DEATH.

Comment: read your own heart in your chamber, and be
Psal. iv. 4.
Meditatio spirituum parit Scientiam : Scientia Com-
punctionem ; Compunctio Devotionem : Devotio
perfecta Orationem.
B. Hugu. de Spiritu & Anima, c. 60.

SOME SHORT
MEDITATIONS, &c.

THERE is nothing in the word of God, none of the revelations he has thought fit to make mankind, that does not well deserve each one's frequent consideration. And therefore it were easy to furnish out a large catalogue of particulars, as some have done, not only for every month, or week, but for every day in the year. But, not being willing to burden the sick man with too great a number of subjects for his serious thoughts, at a season when his faculties, perhaps, are much impaired, or, at least, so taken up with his sickness, that he can think on little else for any time together, I have therefore chosen to mention only a few, leaving him either to enlarge upon them in his meditations, or to add to them, if he find himself able, and shall see occasion for it.

I.

*On the Vanity, Insufficiency, and Transitoriness
of all Earthly Enjoyments.*

I Easily see, that those temporal enjoyments are great blessings, when all things else concur to promote our welfare, and we are mindful to make such use of them, as that they may not obstruct, but help forward, our eternal salvation; when God gives them in mercy, and the possessor uses them with caution, gratitude,

B b and

and charity, to the Donor's glory, and the supply of his own and others necessities; not in luxury or extravagance, to gratify his own lusts, or oppress his meaner neighbours; and whilst he suffers not the love of them to make him in any wise regardless of his duty at present, or of another life hereafter: which if they at any time do, they are sore judgments, and to be looked upon as such, and there is no cause to rejoice in the attainment, or other possession, of them. In this case it may be said of them, as of the strange woman in the (a) *Proverbs*, *They have cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by them. Their house, the place where they are to be had, is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*

But, setting aside this most weighty consideration, and looking upon them only as they are in themselves, and with regard only to this present life, and the conveniencies of it, they by no means deserve to be made the chief end of any man's studies and endeavours; but especially not of a Christian's, who has infinitely more desirable rewards offered him, if he will but be persuaded diligently to seek after them. Such an one should never suffer himself to set his affections upon what perhaps he has no need of, or, it may be, will serve but to increase his cares,

For, alas! all the privileges and possessions of this world are, even in their most gaudy appearances, and with their greatest advantages, but, as (b) *Hipparchus* the *Pythagorean* pronounces concerning them, *ἄσταλα καὶ ἀεὶ ῥαϊα*, fading and unstable, transitory and very uncertain. For, supposing a man not to miscarry in his pursuit after them, as thousands continually do, but to succeed in his attempts, and obtain his fill of all that he can desire; yet, after all, it is daily seen, that those who are most fortunate in this respect, do not always enjoy themselves most. Let them have ever so large a portion of wealth, honour, or power,

(a) Prov. vii. 26, 27.

(b) Galei Fragm. Pythag. p. 12.
they

they do not sleep the better for it, but perhaps the worse; nor are their bodies the less obnoxious to diseases, but, it may be, the more; nor their minds freer from troubles and vexations.

Or, did ever so great satisfaction arise from these temporal good things, yet must this necessarily be of short duration; at most but for this uncertain life, possibly but for a very little part of it. (c) He that to-day struts in his gorgeous attire, looks big, lives high, and glories most in his peculiar happiness above his neighbours, knows not yet to what an ebb the morrow may reduce him, and how much more miserable he may come to be, than those whom he most despises. How many have I myself known, and how many more have I heard or read of, who have been suddenly cut off in the midst of their mirth and jollity, and, when designing to enlarge their treasures, and to solace themselves with the beloved fruits of their labours, have been unexpectedly stripped of their dearest enjoyments, being presently impoverished by fire, by water, by tempests, by losses abroad, or by treachery at home, by their own imprudence, or ill management of their affairs, or by a secret curse of God going along with what either their ancestors, or themselves, had unjustly gotten! And have I not seen or heard of others, whom an indisposition of body, or uneasiness of mind; a disorder'd understanding, or a guilty conscience; the enmity of others, or their own ungovernable avarice or ambition; a lustful manner of life, or a certain peevishness of temper, or some other the like unhappy cause, has made miserable in the midst of the greatest plenty? Riches and satisfaction do not always dwell together. But, had I ever so copious an affluence of the one, it were no impossibility for me to want the other; and so to be still unhappy to a great degree.

(c) Unusque Titan vidit, atque unus dies Stantem & cadentem.
Sen. Herc. Oet. v. 423.

Or, again, if I could suppose myself, which is not reasonably to be supposed, could I suppose myself, I say, to have all the satisfaction I could desire from these worldly advantages, yet am I to remember, that it is only in this world that I can hope for the enjoyment of them. When *Lucian* fancies, that (d) *Mentippus* must first lay aside his staff and pouch, *Charmoleus* his beauty, *Lampicbus* his robes and diadem, *Damafius* his crowns, *Crato* his dignities, the philosopher his beard, and the rhetorician his eloquence, before *Charon* would admit them into his boat, he does but ingeniously describe the wretched state of those who have nothing better than these fading enjoyments to trust to at their death; inasmuch as whatever their possessions be here, they must be sure to leave them all behind them. They can (e) *carry nothing away with them when they die*; neither shall their pomp follow them. The greatest prince, the most honourable potentate, shall have no advantage in the other world above the meanest peasant; but every one shall there be rewarded according to his doings in this life, not according to what he had possessed in it. He will then find himself stripped of all he had most valued himself upon here. And, in the mean time, it is easy to observe, how all his earthly enjoyments are both uncertain and unsatisfactory, and so can never make him truly happy; and by consequence he must have made a very dear bargain for himself, tho' he had (f) *gained the whole world, if at last he lose his immortal soul* by it.

And if the whole world, with all its advantages, were too mean a price for a soul, how can I be so stupidly in love with it, as to forfeit my soul, and ruin myself to all eternity, for so inconsiderable an interest in it, as I can ever hope will fall to my share? What an unaccountable folly and madness is this! And how can I possibly find in my heart to enslave myself to what must by this means prove my inevitable destruc-

(d) Char. & Merc. inter Mortuorum Dialogos. (e) Psal. xlix. 17. (f) Matth. xvi. 26.

tion? Seeing, as (g) *St. Chrysostom* justly argues, this world is but as a dream, and the greatest affluence of the good things of it, but as a pleasant dream, who would so little regard his own welfare, as irrecoverably to ruin himself for it? If, for a pleasant dream of one night only, a man were, upon his awaking, to be immediately seized, and be violently tortured for an hundred years together, without intermission, or cessation, who would ever desire such a dream? I add, What man in his senses would not heartily dread the least thought of it, and most earnestly long and pray to be preserved from it? Yet incomparably greater, as he proceeds, is the difference betwixt the reality of a future eternal state, and the short vain dream of this life; betwixt the endless years of the other world, and the few transitory days of this. Less, far less, is this life, in relation to that which is eternal, than one hour's dream in respect of an hundred years awake; less than a single drop of water in respect of the whole sea. Forbear then, O my soul, to take up with these unsatisfactory and perishing enjoyments, and let thy constant endeavours be after those which are both better, and more lasting; such as may make thee happier at present, with the hopes and expectation of them, than thou canst be by the fruition of whatever thou canst attain to here, and will be sure to make thee infinitely more so for ever in the other life. Do but inform thyself aright of the vast prejudice thou dost thyself by thy fondness for these sublunary advantages, and thou wilt not dare to remain any longer enslaved to them. I will therefore bestir myself, before it be too late. I will prefer, and diligently pursue, my truest and most lasting interest, that so I may be happy both here and hereafter. I will consider my latter end; I will weigh with myself the vanity of all temporal good things, will look upon myself as only *a stranger and pilgrim upon earth*, and use whatever I enjoy here, only as the accommodations I meet with in my inn; whilst

(g) Hom ad Pop. 20.

B b 3

my

my heart is set upon my journey's end, my Heavenly Father's house, whither I am travelling, and those more transcendently valuable rewards, which are prepar'd there for his true and faithful disciples. I will reckon myself only as a sojourner here below, and tho' I will not, with the antient (b) *Encratites* and *Apotacticks*, senselessly deprive myself of the use of what temporal blessings God is pleas'd to bestow upon me; I will not suffer myself to be brought into subjection to them; nor so place my affections upon any of them, as not readily to part with them whensoever they shall be called for: and will endeavour to (i) *make to myself such friends of this mammon of unrighteousness, as that when I fail, and am to continue to longer here, they may receive me into everlasting habitations.*

II.

On the Relation we stand in to Almighty God, the Duty we owe him, and the Knowledge he bath of all our Actions.

AS I received my being from God, and have my whole dependence upon him, I must needs be sensible, that all the duty I can possibly pay him, is no more, no more, did I say? it is incomparably less, than what my relation to him, and the blessings I have receiv'd from him require of me. I can never be too careful to please him, tho' I be ever so intent upon his service, and tho' I watch day and night with all the diligence possible, that I be not any way drawn to offend him. He is our Lord and Creator; we are his creatures and subjects. He has absolute sovereignty and dominion over us; and as we are accountable to him *only* for what we do, so are we accountable to him for *ALL* we do; and must expect, that he will most certainly reward or punish us everlastingly, according as we either approve ourselves to, or disobey him.

(b) Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 17. Epiphan. Hæres. 61. B. Aug. de Hæresibus.

(i) Luke xvi. 9.

He (*k*) is our Lawgiver, our Judge, and our King, who alone has the right to demand of me, and all mankind, whatsoever shall seem well-pleasing to him; and we must leave ourselves without any excuse, if we do not indefatigably labour to answer our obligation. Think therefore, O my soul, what excessive guilt must I necessarily contract, and to what intolerable vengeance do I justly expose myself, by every act of wilful disobedience! If it be a heinous crime to offend an earthly prince, of the same mortal constitution with myself; a fellow-creature, who, tho' advanced far above me in the world, can no more subsist of himself, than I can; who depends wholly, for both his being and well-being, upon God's good Providence, as much as I; and who shall as certainly give up the ghost and die, and be afterwards brought to judgment, as I shall; if it be such a heinous crime to offend such a prince, how much more heinous must it be to offend the great and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords! And how can I answer it to my own conscience, or what can I think will become of me, if I allow myself to do it? He will not fail to (*l*) render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but to them who are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil. And, by consequence, it is not only shameful and highly misbecoming, to behave myself undutifully towards him; but it is unconceivably dangerous, and the readiest way I can take to render myself for ever miserable. It was not to gratify our unreasonable lusts and passions, and lead as sensual lives as the brute beasts, which have no understanding; not to seek after present perishing enjoyments, nor to spend our days in carnal pleasures and delights, that we came into the world; but to (*m*) work out our salvation with fear and trembling, to make provision

(*k*) Isa. xxxiii. 22. (*l*) Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. (*m*) Phil. ii. 12.

for a future state, and prepare ourselves, by a truly Christian conversation, for the perpetual fruition of God in the highest Heavens. And nothing can be more contradictory to this great end of my being, than to indulge myself in any sort of wickedness; and thereby *(n)* treasure up to myself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Nor is there any hope of escape, if I do so. For, as God is just, and will not fail to avenge himself upon sinners; so is his eye continually upon each one, to observe his doings, whether his *(o)* conversation be, as becomes the Gospel of Christ; or whether he takes liberty to transgress his duty, and expose himself to all the tortures threatened to those that do so. He is everywhere present; neither is there any action, any word, any thought or desire, *(p)* that is not manifest in his sight; his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Where-ever I am, or howsoever employed, I am sure to be under his inspection; who sees me, and all my doings, tho' I see not him. I can conceal nothing from him; not the most secret inclinations of my heart. And what great need have I therefore, to be very cautious what I do, that it may be what he will approve of! Dare I take upon me to provoke him to his face? If I dare, the consequence of such presumption must be very terrible, and must leave me without all excuse, when I come at the last day to appear before his tribunal. And, if I dare not, why do I ever give way to any temptation, seeing I know beforehand, that such compliance, how private soever, can no more be hid from his omniscience, than if it had been publicly proclaimed on the house-top? He knows how to *(q)* bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and there is no imposing upon him in any respect. And if this consideration cannot make me diligently watchful over myself, and holy and

(n) Rom. ii. 5. *(o)* Phil. i. 27. *(p)* Prov. xv. 3. *(q)* 1 Cor. iv. 5.
upright

upright in all my ways, it is impossible, that any other should ever do it.

III.

On the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God to Sinners.

BESIDES the authority of God over all, and the knowledge he has of all our ways ; his unspeakable mercy, and most gracious condescension, is another powerful dissuasive from vice, and well worthy of my serious consideration as such. His abundant goodness to sinners, throughout the whole course of their lives, the blessings he heaps upon us in this world, and the far greater he has promis'd in the other, and, above all, the inestimable price that was paid for our redemption, are an indispensable obligation to make his glory the aim and design of all my actions. And indeed, who would not be immediately ravish'd into an ecstasy of love, at the meditation of those transporting bowels of pity and commiseration, which could prevail with Almighty God, not only to create us subjects capable of enjoying his favour, but, when we had justly depriv'd ourselves of all pretence to it, by our disobedience and rebellion, even yet to seek our salvation, and restore us to his love, tho' it were by the death of his only-begotten and dearly beloved Son ? Who would not hereupon be seized with the most profound admiration of the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, the unfathomable dimensions of this love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord ? And how unaccountably do I behave myself, if I will not yet be persuaded to live as one intirely devoted to his service, after all the experience I have had of his abundant, tho' every way undeserved, loving-kindness ?

What more endearing course is it possible that God could have taken to bring sinners to himself, and their own happiness, than, in spite of all their unduti-

undutifulness, and ingratitude towards him, nevertheless to purchase them at so wonderful a price? How could he more emphatically express his tenderness of affection to us, and earnest desire of our welfare, than by thus giving the ever-blessed Jesus to suffer in our stead? Could our redemption have been brought about upon any other easier terms, it had been infinite condescension in God to have been reconcilable to us, upon our most importunate intreaties, and deepest humiliation. But that the reconciliation should begin on his part; that when he (*r*) *saw us polluted in our blood*, he should yet *say unto us, Live*; that whilst we were enemies and rebels, he should not only offer us a pardon, but should contrive a means of recovery for us, that it could never have enter'd into the heart of men or angels to imagine; that God should thus become man, the Creator of all things should be *made of a woman*, the King of the whole world should vouchsafe to suffer upon the cross, for the sake of his obstinate disobedient subjects; this is such excessive astonishing compassion, as were enough to melt a heart of flint; and must render Christians the most despicable creatures in the world, if they can yet allow themselves to persist in their disobedience. Those temporal benefits we all daily and hourly partake of, call for a most humble acknowledgment, and the best services in our power, as a just return for them. Yet all these, heap'd one upon another, are as nothing, if compar'd with the infinite love manifested in our Saviour's sufferings, and the many spiritual blessings we enjoy through him. And can I now find in my heart to slight such amazing condescension? Can I forbear contriving, by all ways imaginable, to proclaim my unfeigned gratitude for it? Oh what love! What pity is this! What an excessive load of miseries do I deserve, if I can yet neglect and undervalue it? And how unconceivably happy shall I be to all eternity, if I but take care to make a right use of it!

(*r*) Ezek. xvi. 6.

I will therefore embrace it with a heart full of joy. I will incessantly bless and praise the most merciful Author ; and will make it my daily study never to forget it, nor to behave myself unagreeably to the remembrance of so inestimable a ransom paid for me.

IV.

On the Covenant we enter'd into at Baptism.

IF God's absolute authority over me, and his unspeakable goodness to me, be strong inducements to a conscientious observance of what is well-pleasing in his sight ; so likewise is the consideration of the covenant whereinto I entered, when I was made a member of Christ by baptism. For this holy ordinance was appointed for my admission into the Christian church, and for capacitating me to partake of the inestimable benefits of my Saviour's death and passion ; so did I then promise and vow on the other hand to fight manfully under my Saviour's banner, *against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to remain Christ's faithful soldier, and servant, unto my life's end.* The thought whereof should sublimiate my mind and manners, and fill my soul with a holy indignation against all unworthy actions, and make me vigorous and unwearied in well-doing, as I would not break my contract, and incur the guilt of dishonesty and apostacy, and expose myself to all the heavy judgments threatened in the Gospel to the refractory and disobedient. Baptism, as I said, is an initiating ordinance, and gives a right to mighty privileges and benefits ; but all this is only on condition ; and if that condition be not faithfully performed, it will but add to the severity of my condemnation. There is a plain stipulation in it, as appears from (s) the institution, and from all the forms of it ; and particularly from our own, wherein the person to be baptized expressly promises to *renounce the devil, and*

(s) Matth. xxviii. 20.

all

all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently to keep his commandments. And what egregious wickedness and treachery must it be, to (t) *start back, when we have thus put our hand to the plough!* And how must it unfit us *for the kingdom of heaven!* We have taken Christ's livery upon us, and have bound ourselves by a solemn military oath, to be true and faithful to him. This is the case of all that have given up their names to him in this holy sacrament; and of myself in particular. And it is out of my power therefore to retreat, and take part with the enemy, without becoming a perjur'd faithless wretch; like a soldier forsaking his colours, throwing away his weapons, and running from his captain. This will make all my sins far more provoking than they would otherwise have been, adding to their own intrinsic guilt that of perfidiousness, and breach of vow; and so, unless prevented by a timely and sincere repentance, will consign me over to so much the sadder share of tortures in the other world. And what can awaken my drowsy conscience, and put me upon consulting my own safety, if this will not? I must be a dreadful harden'd sinner, if I can resolve to break through so powerful an obstruction, to come at everlasting misery. I will therefore call myself forthwith to an account, and see wherein I have broken my faith thus ratified; and will take care to walk more circumspectly for the future, that my conversation may testify in my behalf, that I am not unmindful of the profession I have taken upon me, and the solemn obligation I then enter'd into, to live according to his rules. I will remember, that I am a Christian, baptized into the church, and intitled to the blessings of the gospel, provided I live according to its precepts; but withal, that unless I do this, I am in a far worse condition, than if I had never heard one word of Christianity.

(t) Luke ix. 62.

V.

On the Multitude and Heinousness of our Sins.

IF I turn my eyes from the obligations that lie upon me, to the course of my past conversation, and see how negligent I have been, and how horrid, and how frequent my provocations, here I presently meet with sufficient matter of melancholick and most pensive meditation. Nor need I any more dismal contemplation, to humble me before Almighty God, and force me to fly to him for mercy. It was the royal Psalmist's complaint, that his *(u)* iniquities were gone over his head, and as a sore burden were too heavy for him to bear. And again, *(x)* Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me. And all pious souls see too just reason to break forth, in like manner, into the open acknowledgment of their own unworthiness and demerits, whensoever they call to mind the multitude and heinousness of those sins, whereof they are conscious to themselves.

As to the number of our sins, they are too many to be cast up, though we ever so deliberately set about it. Our sins of omission, and our sins of commission, our wilful sins, and those whereinto we are often betray'd thro' inadvertency or weakness; the sins of our inclination, of our company, of our employment, of the times we live in; our secret and conceal'd, and our publick and most scandalous sins; the sins we remember, and those we have forgotten, or had never taken notice of; the sins of our devotions, of our recreations, of our meals, and our other entertainments; of our excess, and of our parsimony; of our modesty, and of our assurance; of our diffidence, and of our presumption; our later, and our former sins; those of our childhood, of our youth,

(x) Psal. xxxviii. 4.*(u)* Ibid. xl. 12.

and

and of our riper years ; in thought, word, and deed ; against our God, against our neighbour, and against our own selves ; there is such a mass of them, that the least reflection upon it may well put our minds into the utmost confusion ; and, were it not for the infinite mercy of God thro' Christ, must inevitably have lodg'd us long ago in Hell. How must the recollection of such a load of guilt lie heavy upon the soul of every good man, and make him lament and bewail his folly ; and try, by all means possible, to obtain the favour of God, and his pardon and forgiveness ! And what an abandon'd sinner must I be, if I be not wofully terrified at the appearance of so horrid a spectacle, and do not fully resolve, that *I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eye-lids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest*, until I shall have endeavour'd to make my peace with God, by a hearty sorrow, and true repentance, and a full purpose of heart to serve him truly for the remaining part of my life ! They who never *call their own ways to remembrance*, will not much concern themselves to *turn their feet unto God's testimonies* ; but there is none who is duly sensible of the guilt he has contracted, or that frequently sets apart some time, to inquire into the nature of his duty, and his manifold transgressions of it, notwithstanding all the obligations he is under to the contrary, but must be seiz'd with a dreadful apprehension of the great need he has of God's mercy, and the wretched state he must inevitably be in without it.

Nor are we chargeable only with multitudes of sins, the least of which, were it not for the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus, would sink us into the pit of destruction ; but they are also many times attended with several notorious aggravations, having been committed, perhaps, upon deliberation, against the checks of conscience, and clear dictates of the understanding ; against numerous calls and invitations to obedience ; against promises and threatenings, mercies and judgments ;

ments; after vows and resolutions to the contrary, and often repeated, if not become habitual. So that we have all great cause to blush, and be ashamed to look up to heaven, and to *loath ourselves for the evils we have committed in all our abominations.* Our whole life is full of vanity and naughtiness; and if thou, O God, shouldst resolve to (y) *enter into judgment with thy servants, and shouldst be extreme to mark what were done amiss,* not the very best of us could hope to be justified in thy sight. (z) *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity: all whose (a) ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right, art thou. (b) Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.* And yet, alas! How have we all been forgetful of thee? From the highest to the lowest, there is none righteous before thee, none that has not justly deserved thy wrath, and implacable indignation. The most religiously dispos'd cannot but discover numerous failings and imperfections, besides other more wilful transgressions of their duty, enough to strike them to the heart, at every remembrance of them. Much more may others fear, lest a heavy doom befall them, by reason of those more heinous enormities, which every-where discover themselves throughout the whole course of their conversations. If they that have been most observant of God's laws, have yet need of his mercy and favour to be extended to them, or otherwise they cannot be happy; how much more do those want it, who have been more extravagantly wicked! And (c) *if the righteous, after all their care to please God, shall hardly be saved,* these must expect a more terrible appearance before his great tribunal.

This astonishes and confounds me, when I come to apply it to my own case; and would doubtless drive

(y) Psal. cxliiii. 2. (z) Habak. i. 13. (a) Deut. xxxii. 4.
(b) Psal. v. 4, 5. (c) 1 Pet. iv. 18.

me into despair, were it not for the trust I have in my blessed Saviour's mediation. He has obtain'd a pardon for my sins, and so I have great hope and comfort thro' him; but, otherwise, I must have been in a miserable, helpless condition. For though God is infinitely patient and long-suffering, he will not wait always to be gracious, but will bring the sinner to a strict account for all his wickedness; possibly in this world, but most certainly in that which is to come. Nothing can save me but his mercy; but, inasmuch as that is infinite, I will not distrust it, but will humble myself before him; will confess and bewail my sins, and will endeavour, to the utmost of my power, to appease his anger. *And, oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for all mine iniquities, whereby I have offended so good and gracious a God!* I hope he will be prevail'd with to extend his kindness to me; but if at last I do perish, I must, however, confess to his glory, that my destruction will be wholly owing to myself.

VI.

On D E A T H.

QUIS scit an adjiciant hodiernæ tempora vitæ Crassina dii superi? (d) Who knows, says the poet, whether he shall live even till to-morrow? And our blessed Saviour foretold to the jolly rich man, St. Luke xii. 20. that he certainly should not. *Thou fool, says our Saviour, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.* The same, for any thing I know to the contrary, may be my portion! This may possibly be the last day, if not the last hour, of my life. And what can I promise myself will then become of me? Have I been so wise as to make up my accounts with God, and so to have got my soul in a readiness to appear before him? If not, how dismal, how doleful, will my con-

(d) Horat. Carm. l. 4. od. 7.

dition

dition be? It is a terrible change, to be suddenly snatched away from this life, and all its enjoyments, and delivered over to eternal burnings in the other. Yet to this sad fate are all those every day obnoxious, who live in the practice of any sort of wickedness. How happy soever they may be, as to the things of this world, they may possibly be immediately hurried away from them, to a perpetual night of horror, grief, and anguish, never to see day, nor to taste any comfort more.

Awake, therefore, O my drowsy soul; awake and bestir thyself before it be too late, whilst the patience of God is exercised towards thee, and a time of grace and salvation is afforded thee. Awake, consider thy present uncertain habitation, and do not dare to depend upon a short transitory life, that, like a thread, is immediately cut off; and is but as a story, which entertains the auditors whilst in telling, but is quickly at an end. Let death be the subject of thy serious and frequent, I had almost said, of thy incessant meditation. Think, at rising in the morning, What if this should prove to be the last day of my abode here? And again, when lying down at night, think, What if I should never rise more? Perhaps, I find myself in very good health, and as like to prolong my days to a good old age, as most of those about me; and am therefore tempted to pass my time in mirth and ease. But alas! How many of my contemporaries have I known disappointed of their expectations, when as promising as mine, and laid in the grave before they were aware of it! And what happens to one, may as easily befall another, notwithstanding all the care we can take to secure ourselves against it. Every knell I hear, is a warning to me, to be upon my guard, to retire into myself, and see how reckonings stand betwixt God and my soul, and to use the utmost diligence for supplying what I find wanting. Every grave I see, every funeral I attend upon, every friend I lose, every hearse or coffin I

meet with, every one I observe in mourning, calls upon me to reflect on what a precipice I stand, and how many different ways I may be thrown down from it. Oh! Let me not be careless and unconcern'd in such a slippery station; but let me consider well, how exceedingly terrible such a fall must be, to all that are not prepared for it. Nothing is of more importance to me, than to see, that, in all respects, I act like one, on whom the things of this world make no lasting impression, and whose chief care is to please God, and to make provision for a happy eternity. This is the great business for which I came into the world; and how can I hope to die with any manner of comfort, till I have performed this weighty and necessary work?

Yet die I must undoubtedly, and no one knows how very soon. One descends to the grave *(e)* in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: his breasts are full of milk, and his bones moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. In this world a great distinction is made between the great, the rich, and the powerful on the one side; and those on the other, whose circumstances are streight, and who live in a poor necessitous condition: as some also are healthy and strong, and enjoy a great deal of ease and pleasure; whilst others are worn out with sickness, and bodily infirmities, or, perhaps, with a series of crosses, and inevitable vexations. But they are all hastening to their long home, and which of them shall arrive there first, is beyond our foresight, and known only to Almighty God, by whose Providence we live, and at whose appointed time we must all be sure to die. Then shall all alike, whether high or low, rich or poor, have the dust for their bed, and the worms for their covering, without any other remarkable distinction, than what shall have arisen from their dif-

(e) Job xxi. 23, 24, 25, 26.

ferent discharge of their duty, whilst in this mortal state. Some go now, some anon; some this way, some that; some upon timely notice, and some again in an instant, and even when least expecting it. What then can such have to say for themselves, who are not always in some tolerable readiness, to quit this transitory life, which, at its best estate, and when most promising, is yet but as (f) *a vapour that appears for a little time; and then vanishes away?*

Upon this consideration, the apostle St. James, in the words immediately foregoing these now mentioned, very justly rebukes the folly of such as promise themselves a long continuance here, when it is possible their souls may be just upon the wing to take their flight into the other world; and who please themselves with the thoughts of life, and time enough to manage their concerns upon earth, when, perhaps, they are on the very shore of eternity, ready to launch into it. (g) *Go to now, says the Apostle, ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, to buy, and sell, and get gain; whereas you know not, what shall be on the morrow.* You know not how near any of you are to your latter end; how suddenly this frail breath of your's may fail you, and leave your bodies so many useless carcases, incapable of any design, or any sort of business.

Can any one then, can I in particular, presume to live without a continual expectation of such my dissolution; as if I had nothing else to do, but to eat, and drink, and be merry, and to spend my time in idleness and luxury? Is this to live like a Christian, whose profession obliges him to be continually looking forward to another state, and who knows himself to be but a stranger and sojourner upon earth? How can I allow myself to be regardless, either of my duty to Almighty God; or of my own welfare, which has so necessary a dependence upon the good improvement of my short stay here? No, I will rather keep

(f) James iv. 14.

(g) Ver. 13.

in mind, that I have no abiding city here, but am indispensably obliged to be continually seeking after one that is truly so; (b) *a city that has sure and lasting foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* (i) *I will wait and watch all the days of my appointed time, till my last great change come.* Since I know myself not master of one moment of time, I will live in a constant expectation of death, ready to forsake this earthly tabernacle, whensoever it shall please God to call for me. I will think upon my approaching dissolution, and learn, from the thoughts of it, to wean my heart from this present world, and all its most pleasing entertainments; which, how enticing soever, I must be sure in a little time to leave behind me; to renounce all my most beloved lusts, which will otherwise cost me excessively dear, and, perhaps, before I have any longer enjoyment of them; to grow serious and devout, as becomes the relation I stand in to Almighty God, and the great account I must soon give up to him; to bear all afflictions patiently, which I know assuredly cannot affect me long; but may be much nearer an end, than I at present apprehend; to make a good improvement of my time whilst I have it, that I may find no cause to complain of the want of it, when it shall be no more; to be unwearied in well doing, before *the night come wherein no man can work*; and faithfully, resolutely, and immoveably, to retain my integrity at all times, and under whatsoever difficulties or trials, inasmuch as I know not how soon I may receive my great reward. These are some of the advantages that naturally arise from a daily meditation of death; and, to the end they may be my daily care, I will not fail to take all opportunities of conversing with the dead.

Our life here is one continued journey towards the grave, and each one, every day, dispatches some part of it. We are all like so many passengers in a ship, who whether they think of it or not, every minute

(b) Heb. xi. 10.

(i) Job xiv. 14.

draw

draw nearer the end of their voyage. Not only whilst they are awake, and look about them, but when at rest, and fast asleep in their beds, they are gradually conveyed along, till they come to their desired port. As they are always in motion, though it may be without observing it; so their voyage incessantly shortens, and in a while they disembark upon a distant shore.

Such is the life of man. It is a constant progress towards another world, in which we shall all, one after another, be landed in a little time. No sooner shall our breath be recalled, but we shall moulder into the dust, out of which we were taken; shall give up the ghost, and be no more, as to any of the purposes of this life. But then a new scene will forthwith open itself, to our unspeakable either consolation or terror, according to the preparation we had made for it, whilst on our way to it. Death, to the righteous, is the gate of paradise, an entrance to a better life, and the only passage to our promised inheritance: but, to the wicked, it is the beginning of sorrows, delivering them over to the second death, which never shall have an end. And what more cogent argument can any possibly expect, for exciting to a diligent preparation for death, than this consideration of the everlasting state, whereinto it will, one time or other, hereafter, if not at present, be sure to translate us all?

Were death an accidental stroke, that rarely happened, no wonder if people generally did not think themselves much concern'd to expect it. Were only some few liable to it, when it comes, a man might be tempted to hope it might be his lot to escape it. Were it an even lay, whether we should ever be seized by it, this would make a considerable abatement of the sinner's imprudence, in venturing to live regardless of it. Nay, were it allotted to much the greater part of mankind to die, but not to every particular person, there might be some faint plea for

such as are unprepared for it. Or if none may be delivered from it, yet, had men a lease of their lives, that they could certainly know how much of them were yet remaining, it would be less indiscretion in them to put off their repentance, and trifle away their time, in hope to get it up again, by a greater future diligence. But when we are every moment at the mouth of the grave; when we know assuredly, that *every man living is altogether vanity*, and ourselves, amongst the rest; and, moreover, daily see others, as lusty and vigorous as ourselves, and, in all appearance, as like to live as we, taken away before our face; such a prospect as this, one would think, should thoroughly awaken our minds, and enforce our resolutions; and not suffer us knowingly to destroy ourselves: it should teach us earnestly to study how we may perform our duty, in all respects, with the greatest accuracy and circumspection; so as *to give no sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eye-lids*, till we had first secured to ourselves an interest in the Divine promises.

Since we are all so careful of this uncertain life, tho', at best, but of short duration, and full of cares and troubles whilst it lasts; methinks it should seem highly reasonable to every one, that will but allow himself to consider, to have a much greater care of his soul, which is, by far, the better part of him, and whose life will never know an end. Common prudence would hence teach every one to think frequently of death, and have it always in view; especially since the remembrance of it is so necessary and useful, in order to a due regulating our lives. But I must not only think of death, but must think of it in such a manner, as that the effect of these thoughts may shew forth itself in a suitable deportment. I must learn to *number my days* in such a manner, as that I may *apply my heart to* that true and saving *wisdom*, which will, in a great measure, abate the pungency of whatsoever troubles and calamities I meet with

with here, and will make me infinitely happy after my departure hence. To neglect this, is, undoubtedly, the greatest folly and madness in the world; and the readiest way to fill my soul with the utmost confusion, when I come to languish upon a sick-bed, and find my end approaching; but especially, when I shall come at the last day to stand before my Saviour's great tribunal, to answer to the heavy charge, that will hereby lie against me. Nor can any thing, on the other hand, be so much for my advantage, as a constant attendance on this necessary part of my duty; and that unspeakable glory and felicity, that will infallibly accompany it in a dying hour, and thenceforward for ever in the other world.

VII.

On a future Judgment.

MY life is continually drawing towards eternity; and whether I will consider it or not, is each day shorter than it was before. So that how healthy soever I may be at present, no man knows how soon I may be summon'd hence. At most, no great number of years can have pass'd, before I shall be laid in the grave, and all my hopes, and comforts, and designs, and purposes, as far as they concern this life, shall vanish as a dream; and nothing shall seem of any value, but what may be for my advantage in the other world. And thus, having passed off the present stage, I must be brought before *God's tribunal*, to have all my thoughts, words, and actions, canvassed, and my eternal portion allotted me, accordingly as they shall be found to have been: so says *St. Paul*,
(k) We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Tho' death makes a separation for some time betwixt the soul and body, yet this is but for a time;

(k) 2 Cor. v. 10.

which being past, they shall infallibly meet again, and be reunited, and never be parted more. (l) An archangel shall be sent forth, and, as by the sound of a trumpet, shall summon the (m) dead out of their graves; and thenceforward they shall live for ever. (n) Then shall the Son of man also descend *in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory*; and (o) *shall sit on his throne*, and cause *all nations* to be gathered before him, that so he may take an account of their different qualifications, and dispose of them accordingly. Oh the pangs and agonies, the horror and perplexity of mind, wherewith the guilty sinner will be seiz'd, when he shall come there to receive his doom! When, (p) above, he may behold an impartial Judge ready to condemn him; beneath, Hell open to receive him; when, within, shall be a stinging conscience; without, a burning fire; here his sins accuse him, there the devils affright him; and the good angels shall cashier him, as not fit to be admitted into Heaven; and the wicked ones will stand ready to hurry him away into everlasting destruction. When to appear will be intolerable, and yet not to appear will be impossible. Whither will he then flee? Or where can he think to conceal himself? Which way soever he turns himself, he will be sure to meet with nothing for his comfort; with nothing but fear, and shame, and sorrow, and anguish, and all the terrors that the most dreadful apprehensions can work in him. It is impossible to express the extreme astonishment, wherewith all the *workers of iniquity* will then be overwhelmed. But this may, in a good measure, be represented by the judgments threatened in the Revelation, upon the opening of the sixth seal; when it is said, (q) *There was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of Heaven fell unto the earth,*

(l) 1 Cor. xv. 52. (m) 1 Thes. iv. 16. (n) Matth. xxiv. 30. (o) Ibid. xxv. 31, 32. (p) Dionys. Carthus. de quatuor Novissimis, artic. 28. (q) Rev. vi. 12, &c.

even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the Heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? This is a description of a terrible juncture, that may not unfitly be accommodated to the frightful season I am now considering. When (r) the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; (s) and the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and they shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. When the Judge being set upon his throne, (t) Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and shall proceed to inquire into their past conversations, and allot them their reward accordingly. Then shall a narrow scrutiny be made into all my doings, and an unerring judgment passed upon them. And, could I have ever so artfully conceal'd my faults from the discovery of the world here, they will then be all brought to light, before God, angels, and men. They cannot escape the all-seeing eye of God at present; nor shall they ever be forgotten by him hereafter; but will certainly rise up in judgment against me, and condemn me at the last day, if I do not make it my business to forsake them, and obtain the pardon of them, before I be taken hence. Not the most secret of my thoughts is without his notice; but he is privy to whatever

(r) 2 Pet. iii. 10. (s) Rev. xx. 12. (t) Matth. xxv. 32.

impiety lies lurking in my heart, though it have never proceeded farther; and will bring me to an account for it. So that, could I any way contrive to impose upon those I converse with here, by hypocritical pretences, and to hide the evil of my heart and actions from all mankind, this would stand me in no stead at the last day. For then the imposture would be fully disclosed, to my eternal shame and sorrow. (u) *There is nothing covered, that shall not then be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be made known.* But *whatsoever has been spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light*; and that which was *whispered in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed in the publickest manner, in the hearing even of the whole world.* (x) *There is no creature that is not manifest in God's sight, nothing that can escape his notice; but all things are naked and open,* γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχλισμένα, *bare, and like a thing cut down the chine, whereby all the entrails are exposed to the view of the beholder; all things are thus naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do; or perhaps, as Dr. Whitby observes, παρ' ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, to whom we must give an account of ourselves, and all our doings.* 'No man, as Dr. Hammond paraphrases 'upon the words, shall be able to disguise himself 'so cunningly, but that he shall be discovered, disclosed, laid open and bare, as the sacrifice when 'it is first flay'd; then cut down the back, and all 'laid open and discernible before the priest.' Our very inwards shall then be dissected, and men and angels shall see into the darkest corners of the heart, and shall be made acquainted with all the corruption and pollution that has been wont to lodge there. A doleful discovery indeed! And who would not dread and tremble at the least thought of it? It is not in our power now to conceive the height of that confusion, wherein the guilty sinner will find himself, when thus publicly unmask'd; when those wickednesses, which once he would not endure to hear of,

(u) Luke xii. 2, 3.

(x) Heb. iv. 13.

and

and therefore us'd all means to keep them from the knowledge of his companions and acquaintance, shall be charged upon him, proved against him, and finally punish'd with everlasting perdition. But this we can all do, and are the greatest fools in the world, if we do it not; we can condemn ourselves, and all our most beloved iniquities, now in time, whilst the day of grace is continued to us, and God is reconcileable upon condition we duly apply ourselves to him for mercy and salvation. We can by his assistance reform and amend our doings, and earnestly study to lay up to ourselves treasures in Heaven. We can humble ourselves before our blessed Saviour, and beseech and intreat him, as he has already been our ransom, so likewise to be our advocate with the Father, pleading his death, and all his sufferings, in our behalf, whereby to reinstate us in his favour, and obtain us an admission into his kingdom. And can we be so sottish, as not to make this our constant care? Can we think of the day of the Lord, and the immense weight of the sentence then to be passed upon us, and not set ourselves with all our might to prepare for it? They that act thus unaccountably, ought immediately to disown all pretence to reason and understanding, and to acknowledge themselves more senseless than the worst of brutes, none of which were ever guilty of such egregious, intolerable stupidity as this is.

VIII.

On the everlasting State whereto each one shall be adjudged at the Last Day, according to his Doings.

THIS judgment being once over, every one must be thenceforward settled in an eternal state, tho' of very different kinds, according as we shall be found to have observed or neglected our duty, during our short stay here in this world. So our blessed Saviour, who is also to be our Judge, teaches, St. *Matth.* xxv. 46. where, having been describing the nature of the judgment

judgment that is to pass upon all mankind, and having spoken of the righteous and the wicked, under the metaphor of *sheep and goats*, and having declared the joyful sentence that shall be pronounced in favour of the former, and the heavy doom that shall be awarded to the other, he concludes with this farther declaration, what will be the effect of the judgment thus given: *These, the wicked, of whom he had last spoken, shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* The natural importance of which words is, that a lasting future state will be then to succeed, either in incomparable, inestimable, unconceivable bliss and felicity, for such is (y) *eternal life* declared to be in Scripture; or in the most dreadful and intolerable tortures, pangs, and agonies, in the bottomless pit, the punishment whereinto the wicked are ordered to *depart*, ver. 41.

Blessed and happy, thrice happy souls, that can attain to the *life* here mentioned! such shall enjoy the favour of God, and his beatifick presence; and shall not only be admitted to behold his glory, but to reign with him, and be, in some measure, transformed into his likeness, abounding in all that shall be suitable to their enlarged desires; and God only knows how much more than they could so much as desire or wish for. It is above our faculties at present to conceive what those glorious rewards are, which our good God has prepared for them that love him. (z) *It doth not yet appear*, even to our imaginations, *what we shall be; but this we know* beforehand, *that when we shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Wherefore let me now think a little with myself, how transcendent a blessedness must it be, to see God, and be like him, to partake of his glory, and have an endless fruition of him, in that blissful kingdom where all delights abound, and whence all sorrow and tears are everlastingly banished; where none are sick, or grow old, or die; nor are perplexed with cares, nor tor-

(y) Matth. xxv. 35. Luke xii. 32. & xxiii. 29. (z) 1 John iii. 2.

mented

mented with fears; there a serene tranquillity is always to be met with, and joy, and love, and peace, have settled their abode! May my heart be always inflamed with the love of that ravishing state; so as that I may thoroughly learn to despise all things else, in comparison of it! Why do I trifle away my time and pains in pursuit of things that will not profit, and not rather labour after those which would be of everlasting advantage to me? What a meanness of spirit is it to take up with this life's transient, imperfect entertainments, and in the mean while neglect *the true riches*, and lose an invaluable *crown of glory, that fadeth not away*? Can I condescend to employ myself in labouring after the things of this world with an insatiable desire, as if I could never have enough of them, tho' I know I must shortly die, and leave them all behind me; and yet not be persuaded to take pains for what would render me inconceivably happy for ever in the other? This is the very height of madness; and for which I shall be sure to condemn myself when it shall be too late, and incessantly to wish I had been wiser, when I had it in my choice to make sure of a blessed eternity.

Especially when I call to mind, that I cannot fall short of the fore-mentioned blessedness, without incurring the dreadful vengeance of eternal fire. And can I endure the thoughts of this so dismal a change? Far be it from me thus totally to ruin myself for the sake of any ease, or pleasure, wealth, or honour, that I can hope to enjoy here! Whatever unequal notion I have of it at present, it is a great and a certain truth, that the *(a) wages of sin is death*; death not only temporal, but eternal. And can I resolve thus senselessly to ruin myself, rather than accept of that salvation, which is offered in the Gospel, upon the reasonablest terms that may be? *(b) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*; to become the objects of his implacable indignation; to groan under the just

. (a) Rom. vi. 23.

(b) Heb. x. 31.

severities of his heavy displeasure; to be lodged in a bed of flames, and have the devils and damned spirits for perpetual companions, or rather for outrageous executioners; without hope of deliverance, tho' after ever so long a space; to be forsaken of all that is good, all that is happy, or might tend to make us so; to be everlastingly condemned to darkness and horror, to weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, to the never-dying worm, and fire unquenchable. This the damned in Hell know to their cost; and for this reason fret and rage beyond measure. And what is it they would not give, or do, to recover some of those happy opportunities of seeking after a better state, which we so idly squander away! Unhappy wretches! They find, by lamentable experience, what the loss of Heaven implies in it, and how much it was their real interest, to have taken warning, when they were called upon in their life-time, to be holy, wise, and happy. They are always in the agonies of death, and yet never so dead, but that they are still to live in the most exquisite and most lasting dolours. Their fire always burns, but never consumes them; their worm always gnaws, but never kills them. Whilst they were alive, they would never give over provoking Almighty God; and now God will never give over punishing them for their numerous provocations. There is no end or measure of their sorrows, no intermission of their pains, no hope or comfort for them, no prospect of any thing, but inconceivable, intolerable, indeterminable grief, and misery, and anguish. And can I think it too much to live regularly, and take those courses which will make me happy in a good measure here, that I may escape all this dire vengeance, and be completely and infinitely happy to all eternity hereafter? This were a far wiser course, than to gratify my own worldly or carnal inclinations, for a short, no one knows how very short a time, to the everlasting destruction of myself, both soul and body, in Hell. Consider therefore,

fore, O my drowsy soul, and bestir thyself now in time, whereby to prevent those tortures, which thou must otherwise be sure to undergo, and canst never hope to get rid of, when once thou comest to feel the weight of them. Take warning whilst thou art yet on this side the grave, and mayst have time and grace to save thyself, if it be not through thy own neglect or obstinacy in sinning. Imagine to thyself the doleful case of a condemned sinner, already placed in the regions of darkness, those melancholick shades of perpetual night, where no day ever dawns, no light ever breaks in; deprived of all the comforts and pleasures of life, and preserved in being, only to be punished; racked and tormented with a frightful remembrance of his own guilt and folly, piercing him like a dagger at the heart, and no room left for repentance. Imagine him beholding the glory and felicity of the blessed; raging with envy at their happiness, and tearing himself for anguish and vexation, when he reflects upon what he has lost, purely for the sake of his brutish lusts, and unreasonable passions, for those pleasures of sin which were but for a moment, but for which he must now pay dear for evermore. Imagine him farther lamenting the sharpness of his pains, the excessive burnings of that fire and brimstone, wherein he incessantly languishes, and the malice of the devils discharging their fury upon him, and plaguing and tormenting him with the utmost violence. Imagine him once more cut off from all hope of redress, so as not only to be thus infinitely tortured at present, but to be assured beyond all doubt, that these his tortures shall perpetually harass him through a long eternity. Imagine the sinner, I say, irrecoverably plunged in this excess of unspeakable misery, and see if all the glory of the world can tempt thee to change condition with him but for one hour. If not, what desperate phrenzy must that be, that can withhold thee from taking all the care that may be, to save thyself from such insupportable, and yet irreparable destruction?

tion? Can I suffer myself to be thoughtless and unconcerned, when upon the brink of this bottomless abyss of pains and sorrows, and each moment in danger of dropping into it? No. Far be it from me to betray such an excess of the most unaccountable folly, such an unpardonable instance of the most destructive enmity to my own soul. On the other hand, I will begin to consider in time, and will use my utmost diligence to guard against that place of torments, and procure *an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*. I will make it my business to keep within that *narrow way that leadeth unto life*; will *strive to enter in at the streight gate*, though I tug hard to get through; will do or suffer whatever it shall please God to require of me, or lay upon me; and will be highly thankful, if I can at last be carried into Heaven, tho' it were in a chariot of fire. Welcome sighs and tears, welcome whatever penances my religion can impose upon me, whatever terrors the world can threaten me with, whatever pains I can be at in God's service! welcome all that can befall me for my Saviour's sake, *who endured the cross, and despised the shame*, for me! I will watch and pray, will deny myself, and mortify the flesh, and do my best to proceed from grace to grace. And may it please the good and gracious God, that grace may at last have its completion in glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord! To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise, world without end.
Amen.

IMAGE

A
C O L L E C T I O N
O F F A R T H E R
P R A Y E R S
F O R T H E
S I C K P E R S O N :

To be used upon SEVERAL OCCASIONS,
as he shall see fit.

My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord : Early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. Psal. v. 3.

My hope hath been in thee, O Lord : I have said, Thou art my God. Psal. xxxi. 16.

Hear me, O Lord ; for thy loving-kindness is comfortable : turn thee unto me according to the multitude of thy mercies. Psal. lxix. 17.

COLLECTION

OF THE

RESEARCH

IN

THE HISTORY



PROPER
PRAYERS
FOR THE
USE of the SICK.

A Prayer for the Sick, when first taken Ill.

I.

O Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, who givest life, and health, and all other blessings, and recallest them as it pleases thee, I desire to behold thy hand in every thing that befalls me, that under all thy dispensations I may look up to thee, the Author of them; and may study to improve them to thy glory. And, now that I find myself discomposed, and sickness has already taken hold of me, I immediately fly to thy almighty power, and unspeakable goodness, for relief. And do not thou refuse to hear me, when I call upon thee. Give me grace to account of my distemper as thy fatherly visitation, and to hearken both to the rod, and him that has appointed it; and not only to bear thy chastisement with patience and submission, but to seek, that I may be made

better by it ; to inquire into the end for which it comes, and faithfully endeavour to answer thy design in it. As it is a scourge for my sins, let it also be a cure for them ; so effectually awakening my soul to serve and please thee, as that I may no more return to folly, nor ever allow myself in what tends to thy dishonour, and my own destruction. Or, if death is to be the end of this my sickness, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ; that I may leave this world as becomes a true disciple of our blessed Lord, with a steady affiance in his mediation, and an unconcernedness for the things of this life, an unfeigned repentance for all my sins, and a chearful resignation of my soul into thy hands, as into the hands of a loving God, and merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

DEliver me, O Lord, if it be thy blessed Will, from my present want of health. Sanctify it to me, that it may be a means of working in me what is well-pleasing in thy sight, mortifying all vice and wickedness in me, and raising up my thoughts and affections to a better state, and making me more intent than ever, upon approving myself to thee. And, this good end being once accomplished, may it please thee to raise me from my bed, and enable me to put all my good purposes in execution, to thy honour and glory, and my own salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

III.

BUT, Lord, if I am not any longer to continue here, grant me a safe and an easy passage hence, that death may be to me a blessed entrance into thy heavenly kingdom. I am not fond of life, for any other end, but to serve thee, and save my own soul. But, if it may tend to either of these uses, deny me neither the enjoyment of my former soundness and strength,

strength, nor grace to make a suitable improvement of it. And whenever thou hast determined to take me hence, take me, I most humbly beseech thee, into thy favour, through thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

IV.

I A M thine, O Lord; save me, and suffer me not to be put to confusion; but fit me for whatever thou designest for me. Cleanse and purge me from all corruption, take away all my dross, and renew a right spirit within me. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts: look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Upon sending for the Minister to visit the sick Person.

I.

A Lmighty and most merciful Father, who of thy Divine Providence hast appointed an order of men to officiate in thy name, not only as thine ambassadors, to call upon people, and intreat them to be reconciled to thee, but moreover to make known thy Word and Will to them, to administer thy holy sacraments, to be advocates to thee for them, and to perform all those offices, which are necessary for building them up, in their most holy faith; let it not be in vain, that I have now sent to desire the good man's company and assistance. All his endeavours without thee must inevitably prove as nothing. Could he speak with the tongue of men and angels, it were to no purpose, unless thy blessing go along with what shall be delivered. Nor will all his kind offices do me any service, if not accompanied with thy grace. Hence I beg of thee, most gracious God, to be with him, and prosper him, in all his undertakings

takings for my good. Open his mouth, that he may speak a word in season. Hear all his prayers that he shall offer up for me; and grant me all the inestimable blessings he shall implore in my behalf. And open mine ears likewise, that I may duly attend to whatsoever he shall tell me out of thy law, and dispose my heart carefully and conscientiously to perform it, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

II.

LET thy Holy Spirit be present with him, to assist his kind intentions, that they may prove effectual for fitting and preparing me for my last great change; which cannot possibly be far off, but may perhaps be already at the door. It is thy own command by the mouth of thy holy Apostle, that, *if any be sick, he call for the elders of the church, to pray over him, with a promise, that the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and, if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him; and with a declaration moreover, that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man, and most certainly not the less, if he be dedicated to holy ministrations, to transact matters betwixt thee and thy church, avail-eth much.* In obedience to thy command, I have now sent to my proper pastor, the minister of thy word and sacraments amongst us, to crave his help in my great necessity. And I most humbly beg of thee, that, of thy wonted clemency and goodness, thou wilt condescend to bless our meeting, and make it successful to those weighty ends whereto it is intended, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon Appearance of Recovery.

I.

ALmighty and ever-blessed Lord God, from whom alone are the issues of life and death, who killest and makest alive, bringest to the grave, and bringest back again; I desire, with a heart full of unfeigned gratitude,

gratitude, to proclaim thy great goodness towards me at this time. I praise thee for thy seasonable correction, whereby to put me in mind of my natural frailty and mortality, to wean my affections from this vain transitory world, and to put me upon the more diligent preparation of myself for another and a better. Blessed be thy Name, that thou didst not immediately cut me off without warning, as thou mightest justly have done; and not only hast allowed me a space of reflection, whereby to get my soul into the fitter posture for appearing before thy dreadful tribunal, but now givest me hopes of a space to reduce my holy purposes and resolutions into practice. May it seem good in thy sight, to perfect that recovery thou seemest to have begun in me, and to grant me a longer continuance here; not for the gratification of any worldly or sensual inclinations or affections in me; but to the end that, by good improvement of the time thou shalt allow me, I may obtain a completer conquest over all sort of vice and wickedness, and a greater readiness to the performance of my duty to thee; may cleanse myself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit: and may perfect holiness in thy fear, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

AS my sole dependence is upon thee, O Lord, and all my hopes of health are from thee alone, so I acknowledge all my services to be due to thee, and that I must leave myself without excuse, if I do not carefully employ all the time thou shalt afford me in this world, to thy honour and glory. Do thou therefore incline my heart to have a constant respect to this great end of my living here, that I may not trifle away the life thou givest me, for working out my salvation, much less mis-spend it in any vicious or sinful course, but that I may behave myself always as in thy presence, and as remembering the great account I must one day give up to thee, and I know not how

soon. Grant it may be my daily study, to be in such readiness for my latter end, that it may never find me unprovided for it. At this time sanctify, I beseech thee, my present condition to me; and give me grace to make a right use of this, and all other thy dispensations; that, if it shall be thy good pleasure to restore me to my former health, I may lead the residue of my life in thy fear, and to thy glory: or else give me grace so to take thy visitation, that, after this painful life ended, I may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

LORD, I pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow me, and make me continually to be given to all good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon a Recovery from Sicknefs.

I.

O Holy and most gracious Lord God, who art infinitely good to them that put their trust in thee; I have not only learned by the hearing of the ear, but my own late, besides former experience, has taught me, that thou art abundant in goodness and mercy. It is in thee I live, move, and have my being. And thou hast in a particular manner expressed thy love to me, in lifting me up from the gates of death. Thou hast brought my soul from the grave; and hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the pit. For this, and all other thy undeserved favours, for ever blessed be thy holy Name. I earnestly desire, that my heart may be duly affected with a sense of them, and that I may never dare to abuse such transcendent loving-kindness; but whatever length thou addest to my days, may be faithfully

fully spent in observing thy laws, and exalting thy praise. I am made whole; make me also strictly watchful over myself, that I sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto me. Let the consideration of the weak condition I have been in, have such influence upon my mind, as that I may not dare to neglect, or defer, any part of my duty, lest I be snatched away before it be finished. I know not how soon I may be reduced to the same, or a worse estate, when I shall be able to do very little for myself. Cause me therefore to take care in time, to make my calling and election sure, that such a visitation may be no surprize to me, nor may be able to terrify me with the dread of an unhappy death. As thou hast given me a space for amendment, give me moreover a heart carefully to amend whatsoever is amiss in me. Make me always mindful how frail I am, and how unable to stand the shock of another sickness, whensoever thou shalt send it, and to apply myself in the mean time to do what it may be then too late to wish I had done. Let no one sin ever have dominion over me, nor any temptation prevail against me, or render me in any wise regardless of the indispensable obligations I stand in to thee, my most loving Saviour and Deliverer. Work in me both to will, and to do, of thy good pleasure. And, whilst thou seest fit to continue me here, let every day thou addest to my life, bring me a step nearer to the fruition of thine everlasting glory. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

II.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness. I called upon the Lord in my distress, and thou heardest me, and answeredst my request. Thou hast inclined thine ear to me, and art become my salvation. May my mouth be always filled with thy praise!

praise! and may my gratitude farther shew forth itself, by an universal obedience to thy precepts, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord! *Amen.*

III.

TO the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in that light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, be honour and power everlasting. *Amen.*

Upon sending for the Physician.

O Most gracious Lord God, on whom is all my dependence, and of whose abundant mercy it is that I am now in the land of the living, though at present in a weak and languishing condition [*or, though at present seized with sickness*]; succour and relieve me for thy mercies sake. I am desirous to make use of such means as thou hast appointed, in order to a recovery, that I may not seem any way to slight that life thou hast condescended to bestow upon me, and hitherto to continue to me. And, forasmuch as thou hast ordained the physician for the benefit of those who languish under any bodily distemper, I have resolv'd to try his skill in order to a cure. But my chief hope is in thee: O be thou my helper; for, without thee, vain is the help of man. Direct thy servant to what may be proper for my case; and let thy blessing accompany his prescriptions, and give success to them. All the most efficacious methods of cure are nothing of themselves, nor can work farther than thou impowerest them. To thee therefore I address myself for thy concurrence with them. It is but with thee to speak the word, and thy servant shall be healed. Oh may it please thee to issue out thy command, and it shall not be in vain, that I am about to use the means that shall be directed. But never permit me to put my trust in whatsoever medicine, but only in thy blessing; without which, all
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inferior assistance will be found of no advantage. Thou art the great Physician, that alone can'st effectually remove all my maladies: and all other helps are but instruments in thy hand, that work according to thy good pleasure. Be thou with me, to guide and assist, to bless and prosper them, to thine own glory, and the welfare of thine unworthy servant, who here most humbly sues to thee for pity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon taking of Physick.

O Lord, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, our only help in time of need; I most humbly supplicate thy favour to thy faithful servant labouring under thy correction. Lay no more upon me, than thou wilt enable me to bear. Consider my feeble mortal constitution, and proportion my distemper to my strength, that I may know how to bear it with a true Christian patience, and resignation to thy Divine Will. Hear my complaints, and remove the cause of them, as shall seem to thee most expedient for me. Give a blessing to what I now take, in order to a recovery of my lost health. Be thou my chief Physician; for thy direction cannot fail me. And, seeing I put my whole trust in thee, vouchsafe, of thy great mercy, to administer to me in my necessity, and to grant me ease, and comfort, and health here in this world, and to fit me for everlasting life with thee, and thy holy angels and saints, in the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *Amen.*

When given over by the Physician.

I.

ALmighty and everlasting God, whose I am, and * whose laws I ought to have faithfully obeyed, but have most vilely transgressed them, throughout my whole life; for these my abominations, of what-
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ever fort, I desire to humble myself before thee in the most submissive manner [or, * *whom I have heartily desired to serve with reverence and godly fear; tho' I am grieved to think with what great weakness and imperfection I have done it; these my failings I lament and bewail before thee: and much more my grosser sins and iniquities, whereby I have highly provoked thee against my own soul*]. I heartily detest and renounce them all, most humbly beseeching thee not to cast me off by reason of them. Hearken not to their cry against me, but to my blessed Saviour's intercession for me. Wash them all away with his most precious blood, that they may neither appear against me to my shame and sorrow here in this world, nor to my eternal condemnation in the other. Consider my contrition, accept my tears, assuage my pain, as shall seem to thee most expedient for me. And, forasmuch as I put my full trust only in thy mercy, impute not to me my former transgressions; but strengthen me with thy blessed Spirit, and, whensoever thou art pleased to take me hence, take me unto thy favour, through the merits of thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

SEeing the physician has already past his sentence, and I have no farther expectation or hope of benefit by his ministry; and consequently am to look upon myself as no longer design'd for this world; I with the profoundest humility intreat thy pity, O Lord, in order to the other. And since there remains no probable means of cure for my body, do thou condescend to take my sick soul into thy hands, and cure it of all the guilt that lies so heavy upon it, and so sadly overwhelms me with shame and sorrow. I exceedingly lament my own folly and wickedness, and am confounded at the thought of it; which pierces me to the quick, and fills my soul with the deepest remorse and terror. In thee alone is my help, and
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in thy boundless mercy and compassion. Spare me, good Lord, I beseech thee, and, though most highly provoked, be in my blessed Saviour most graciously reconciled to me. For his sake pardon all my sins, and save me *for thy mercies sake. If thou wilt, thou canst raise me up, and grant me a longer continuance here.* But, forasmuch as in all appearance the time of my dissolution draweth near, bestow upon me those holy and heavenly qualifications, which may fit me for my approaching change. Gather every root of bitterness out of my mind. Rescue me from the power, and defend me against all the wiles, of the devil. Mortify all the remainder of the old man in me; and renew me perfectly in the inward man. Quicken, improve, and increase every spark of grace that is in me; and make me to be such, before thou callest me hence, as I desire to be thenceforward to all eternity, thro' Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

III.

I AM coming to thee, sweet *Jesu*: open thine arms to receive me graciously. Thou hast purchased me to thyself; suffer me not to fall short of all that happiness thou diedst to procure for me. Withdraw not thy mercy from me at my last hour, when I have the greatest need of it, and must be everlastingly ruined without it. Let not the enemy have any advantage against me in my extremity, nor the wicked approach to hurt me. Give thy holy angels charge over me, that they may conduct me safely through the valley of death, and bring me to thine everlasting kingdom; that there I may sing incessant hallelujahs, with the blessed choir of saints and angels for evermore. *Amen.*

IV.

Blessed God, merciful and gracious, What great things hast thou prepared for them that love thee; such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, and
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it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive! Oh that I may be admitted to taste of such incomparable blessedness! It will be a happy exchange for me to leave this world, and all its mean, transitory enjoyments, for the inestimable glories that are promised at thy right-hand: in firm hope and expectation whereof, I commend my soul into thy hands, O Lord, thou God of truth. *Amen.* Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

When he apprehends himself about to expire.

HASTE thee, O Lord, to deliver me. In thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, my most merciful Saviour, and only Redeemer, in thee alone is all my trust: let me never be confounded. O blessed Jesus, I sue to thee for mercy: mercy, O Lord, and forgiveness of my sins, is what I most humbly beg of thee. O Christ, save me. O God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, Three Persons, and One God, have mercy upon me. Receive my soul into thy hands. And for thy mercies sake place it in thy heavenly kingdom, among thy holy angels, and blessed saints. O Lord, hear me, and be merciful to me. Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. *Amen, O Lord, Amen.*

For those about the Sick Person.

AS thou, O God, art infinitely gracious to thy poor creatures, continually multiplying thy loving-kindnesses towards us from day to day, and from year to year, and hast required of us to be loving and kind to each other, and desire our neighbour's welfare as our own; in an humble imitation of this thy goodness, and obedience to thy command, I here beg leave to supplicate thy favour in behalf of all those who attend about my bed, or have in any respect the trouble of assisting me, now that I know not how to take care of myself. Recompense them, O Lord, all the

the good that they have done for me. Be with them whensoever they shall come to be in the same helpless condition they now see me in; and furnish them at that time with such tender-hearted and careful friends, such affectionate relations, and such assistance of all kinds, that they may not want any of those necessary helps, which I have received from them. And, in the mean time, grant that, by seeing me in this helpless weak estate, they may be so effectually admonished of their own mortality, that they may learn forthwith to apply themselves to the working out their salvation with care and diligence, and so may be always prepared for sickness or death, whensoever thou shalt send either of them. This I beg for them all, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and only Saviour. *Amen.*

For his Family and Relations.

I.

O Lord God Almighty, who dwellest in the highest Heavens, and yet humblest thyself to behold thy worthless creatures here below, and dispensest thy blessings among them, as seems best to thine infinite wisdom; I praise thee for the constant experience I have had of thy great goodness to me all my life long. And, now that I am going the way of all flesh, and must be speedily gathered to my fathers, I not only desire to retain, to my last breath, a thankful remembrance of this thy loving-kindness; but beg liberty also at the same time to intercede with thee, for those I leave behind me, for [my wife and children, and other] my near and dear relations. Take them, all into thy protection, and administer to them all things pertaining to life and godliness. [Be a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow.] All their wants are open to thy knowledge; let them be supplied by thy power and goodness. Keep them as the apple of thine eye. Preserve them under the shadow of thy wings: and let no evil come nigh their
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their dwelling. Thy blessing is incomparably the most desirable portion I can leave them; let not that be wanting to them. But bestow upon them, I beseech thee, all blessings spiritual and temporal in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

II.

BLESS them in their bodies, and bless them in their souls; bless them in the basket, and in the store, in their going out, and in their coming in, and all that they put their hands unto. But, above all, bless them with the choicest spiritual blessings, with a pure heart, and a sound mind; with a contempt of the world, and a sure trust in thee; with a grateful sense of thy kindness, and a soul full of love; with a knowledge of thy will, and a care to perform it; with the assistance of thy Spirit, and life everlasting, through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

When under any strong Temptation.

I.

O Heavenly and most merciful Father, I most humbly beseech thee, for thy Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord, have mercy upon me, and succour me in these terrible assaults and temptations of the devil. Deliver my soul from all his power and craft. Send me strength from above, that I may retain my integrity, may resist the enemy, and stand stedfast in this day of trial. Be thou my strong rock, and castle of defence; that, being preserved through thy grace and assistance, I may continue as I have promised, and as thou mayest justly expect me to be, thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end. This I beg, O Lord, through the merits, and for the sake, of thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

HEAR me, O Lord; for thy loving-kindness is comfortable. Turn thee unto me according to the multitude of thy mercies, and hide not thy face from

from thy servant, when I am in trouble. Oh haste thee, and hear me; draw nigh unto my soul; and save it; deliver me from my subtle and outrageous enemy. O Lord my God, lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him. If I be cast down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it. But my trust is in thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in thy salvation: Oh never be wanting to me; but hearken to my petition, and hear me at all times; but more especially in this my present conflict with the grand destroyer of souls; and give me cause to praise and magnify thy name, O Lord my God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

III.

O God, who knowest me to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that, by reason of the frailty of my nature, I cannot always stand upright; grant me such strength and protection as may support me in all dangers, and carry me through all temptations, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

When tempted to Presumption.

Almighty and most righteous God, who searchest the hearts, and triest the reins, and renderest to every one according to his doings; take pity upon me a guilty sinner, and suffer me not to presume upon thy mercy, whilst I retain an affection for any kind of sin. I know thy clemency and compassion are infinite, and thou art always ready to embrace a returning prodigal: and I cannot therefore doubt of thy pardon, were I duly qualified for it. But my only danger is, lest my sins have made too great a separation betwixt thee and thy poor creature, for me to hope any longer for thy favour. Wherefore I humbly pray thee, to discover me truly to myself; and if there be any way of wickedness yet remaining in me, purge it away, that I may be a fit object of thy fatherly commiseration. Permit me not to encourage

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myself

myself in a groundless reliance upon thy favour ; whilst in the mean time I am really unqualified for it. But teach me seriously and impartially to examine my heart and ways, before I venture to pass so easy sentence upon myself. Let not thy patience to me hitherto work in me an expectation of future happiness, upon any other terms than those of the Gospel ; that so I may be induced to study, how most effectually to make my calling and election sure ; and to this end may set myself, conscientiously and universally, to observe thy commandments all the days of my life. Help me to reform all that is amiss in me, and to make such a progress in holiness, as that I may safely depend upon thy mercy and kindness to me, here in this world, and may be for ever happy with thee in the other, through the merits of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

When inclinable to Despair.

O Almighty Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him of all thy faithful servants ; I am ashamed, and greatly confounded, to think that I should seem in any wise to distrust thy goodness, after I have had such abundance experience of it, and after all the gracious promises thou hast made, to those who ask any thing according to thy will. Yet I must confess, that fear, and a horrid dread, have taken hold of me, lest my portion should be amongst the reprobates, who are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. This thought strikes me to the heart, and I am not able to bear up under the weight of it. Do thou therefore support me with the comforts of thy Holy Spirit. Speak peace to my disconsolate soul, and assure me, thou art reconciled to me in the Son of thy love ; that thou art my Sun and my Shield at present, and wilt be my exceeding great Reward hereafter. Forgive these my doubts and fears ; and so dispose my mind,
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and confirm my trust in thee, as that a remembrance of my sins may never incline me to despair of thy kindness; but, on the other hand, may drive me to my Saviour to sue for his intercession in my behalf, and may put me upon an indefatigable attendance upon my duty, whereby to capacitate me for a sure confidence in his all-sufficient merits and mediation. Do not only pardon all my transgressions for his sake, that so I may be for ever happy in thy heavenly kingdom, but convince me, in the mean time, that thou hast done it, for my satisfaction and comfort, whilst I remain here below. I look upon it as one of Satan's stratagems, to put me out of heart, that he may prevent my earnest endeavours to please thee. Do thou therefore enable me to reject this and all other his motions, and so to betake myself to thee for relief, and so to observe thy holy laws, as that thou mayest cause thy face to shine graciously upon me, and make me to rejoice in thy favour, both now and evermore, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

When Weak and Languishing.

I.

O Merciful God, who, for the sins of man, didst send death into the world, and sickness in order to it; behold my weak and languishing estate, and extend thy pity to me. Thou seest how low a condition I am reduced to; and what will become of me, none besides thee knows. But thou art a God, who art full of mercy and compassion; and hast directed me to call upon thee in the day of trouble. This encourages me to cry to thee now for help, when I am not able to help myself. Let me, O Lord, see the love of a tender Father, in all thy dealings with me; and more particularly in this exercise of my patience. I do not repine at it, but acknowledge, to thy praise, that my sins have loudly called for it; and that thou, of very faithfulness, hast

caused me to be troubled. Let this consideration make me truly sensible of thy kindness, and not only contented, but thankful for such thy proceedings towards me, in hope that the sickness of my body may be for the health of my soul, and may be a means of promoting my salvation in the great day of account, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

II.

O Lord, thou knowest the frailty of my natural constitution, and how unfit I am to contend with a long disease; be intreated to consider my infirmity, and, in thy due time, to relieve me; lest my patience be at length tired out, and so I fall under thy heavy displeasure. Be not extreme to mark what I have done amiss: but in the midst of judgment remember mercy, and make me glad with the joy of thy countenance. I am intirely at thy disposal; cause all things to work together for my good, that whether by life, or death, I may glorify thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

When troubled with acute Pains.

O Blessed God, just and holy, who doest not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; withhold not thy assistance from me in this my sharp and dolorous condition. Thine arrows stick fast in me; and thy hand presseth me sore. I am made to possess [months, or] days of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? And I am full of tossing to and fro unto the dawning of the day. I am feeble and sore smitten; I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart. My sorrows are enlarged, my wound is great, and my soul is full of trouble. And I have none to seek to for a mitigation of my pains, but to thee, O Lord. I freely own my sufferings to be far less than I have deserved: and that they have not been far worse than they are,
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is purely of thy goodness. But yet, since they pierce deep, and are become almost too hard for me to bear, I am forced to call to thee for aid; beseeching thee not to punish me according to mine iniquities, but to spare me for thy mercies sake. Endue me with that patience, which may enable me readily to submit to thy chastisement, and that hearty repentance for all my sins, which may invite thee to put an end to my correction: lay no more upon me, than thou wilt capacitate me to bear. My soul melteth away for very heaviness: comfort thou me, and let thy loving mercy come unto me, O Lord, according to thy word. Hear my most humble supplication according to thy loving-kindness; and quicken me as thou art wont. Continue me under thy rod, only so far as may be for thy glory, and my own advantage. Sanctify it to me whilst I feel the smart of it, and am made to groan and sigh by reason of it; and when its work shall be once done, (and oh that it may not be long in doing!) remove it from me, and give me a fresh occasion to rejoice in thy saving health, through Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Upon Abatement of Pain.

O Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever. I called upon the Lord in my necessity, and he hath heard me, and granted a relaxation of my pains. Even as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. He knoweth whereof we are made; he remembreth that we are but dust, and cannot subsist, much less enjoy any comfort or ease, without his good Providence taking care of us. Blessed be thy Name, O gracious God, and may my soul, and all that is within me, laud and praise thee, for the comfortable change I feel in myself, and the ease and refreshment thou hast granted me! The sorrows of my heart were enlarged; but now it is far otherwise

with me. Thou hast, in a great measure, brought me out of my trouble, which lay so heavy upon me, and forced me to make my complaint to thee. What shall I return unto thee, O Lord, for all the benefits that thou hast done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord; I will praise thee, and give thee thanks, in the best manner I am able; will magnify thy power, thy goodness, and thy faithfulness; and will be telling of thy salvation from day to day. While I live, will I praise the Lord; yea, as long as I have my being, I will sing praises to thee, O God: and in my distress I will always put my trust in thee, who hast vouchsafed at this time to deal so lovingly with me, and I will constantly join with the church in its usual doxology; Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.*

When troubled in Mind.

O Thou great Physician of souls, I come unto thee for relief against that heavy pressure that lies sadly upon my spirits at this time. It is not without thy good Providence that so dreadful a calamity has befallen me. And, as it is thy visitation, I willingly submit to it, and shall set myself to bear it, without the least repining or discontent. Tho' I am distressed, and greatly afflicted; yet I know it is thy doing, and therefore to be borne with an unwearied patience. It is also of my own procuring, and so I have none to blame for it but myself, and those mine iniquities which have called for it. Righteous art thou, O Lord; just is thy judgment. Yet, with an unfeigned resignation to thy Will, I find myself constrained to supplicate thee for the removal of it in thy due time, that so I may be better able to do thee service, than I am at present. Thou seest the woful state I am in; how my mind is disordered, my thoughts are loose and confused, my understanding

is clouded, my affections are ungovernable, my whole soul is out of tune, and all my faculties in a great measure disabled for a due attendance upon thy worship, and the faithful obedience I owe to thy most holy laws. Convince me hereby, how weak and frail I am of myself; and in what continual need I stand of thy help, without which I can discharge none of the offices for which I came into this world. If thou withdrawest my breath, I die; if thou deniest me the assistance of thy grace, I go on sinning, and am utterly undone; if thou takest away my comforts, I am sad and dejected, my spirits droop, and my heart waxes faint. And to thee therefore, my only refuge, I now betake myself for help. Refuse not to speak comfort to my disconsolate soul; but visit me with thy salvation. Shew forth thy marvellous loving-kindness, thou that art the Saviour of them who put their trust in thee. Restore me to a right use of my faculties, a composure of mind, and a readiness of compliance with thy Will in all things. Help me to the enjoyment of myself, and of thy favour; and make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Save, Lord, and hear, O King of Heaven, when I call upon thee, through the merits of thy only Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For a Woman in Travail.

I.

O Eternal God, thou Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, and who hast promised to hearken to those that call upon thee in their necessities; hear the supplication of thine handmaid, who feel my travail coming upon me, and cry unto thee in the anguish of my soul. Watch over me for good; forgive my sins; and moderate my pains, if it be thy blessed Will. As thou hast given me a power to conceive, grant me likewise

strength to bring forth, and that I may be a joyful mother of a [*or, of another*] child, endued with a sound and perfect body, complete in all its parts, and fitted for all its proper operations, and with an understanding capable of knowing thee, and thy ways, and with a will disposed in due time to love and fear thee. And grant moreover, that it may live to serve thee faithfully, and do good in its generation, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O Lord, the faster my pangs come upon me, the more I beg thou wilt exert thy strength for my ease, that I be not overwhelmed with the weight of them. Consider my impotency, and support and deliver me. Be not wanting to me now that trouble is hard at hand, [*or, lies heavy upon me;*] and I have none that can give me ease, or safety, but thou alone. Forsake me not when my strength faileth me, when my spirits faint, and I cannot bear the burden of my sorrows without thy assistance. Shew a token upon me for good, that they who are about me may praise thy Name, and may rejoice to see, that thou Lord hast holpen me, and comforted me, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

III.

Forgive my sins, O Lord; and purge out of me all inclination to whatever sort of wickedness. Be with me, and the child I labour of, and grant, O gracious Lord, that we may live to praise and honour thee. Grant we may be thy faithful servants here, and, whensoever thou shalt see fit to take either of us out of this world, be graciously pleased to make us partakers of thine everlasting kingdom, for the love of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

After

After Deliverance in Child-birth.

I.

THOU hast, of thy great goodness, O Lord, carried me safely thro' the great pain and peril of child-birth. And now [that I have recovered some measure of strength after my hard labour,] I desire to pay my most humble acknowledgments, and profoundest adoration, to thee, my Saviour and Deliverer! Lo! Children, and the fruit of the womb, are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord. To thee therefore be the praise, that another child is born into the world, that thou hast preserved me, its mother, under the sorrows with which I was encompassed; and that thou hast restored me to some degree of health at present, and givest me hope of having it perfected in a little time [or, *present ease, and the hope of a recovery*]. Go on, O Lord, to complete and establish it, if it seem good in thy sight, and may be for thy glory; and incline my heart to shew forth thy praise, not only with my lips, but by the holiness and uprightness of my life in all respects. Let a sense of thy goodness be always upon my mind; and raise in me such unfeigned love and gratitude to thee, that I may never cease to sound forth thy praises, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O Be pleased to continue, increase, and sanctify, thy mercies to thine unworthy servant, that I may live to thy honour, by whose good Providence alone it is that I live at all. Perfect what thou hast thus far wrought in me, and so establish my health, as that I may be fitted to praise and serve thee. Preserve me from the power of the tempter, and the corruption of mine own evil heart, that I mis-spend none of the time thou grantest me for better purposes, but my whole study may be to observe thy statutes, and to be every day improving in my obedience to them. Lead me by thy counsels here, and
hereafter

hereafter receive me into glory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

III.

AND cast an eye of pity upon my poor infant, who is not able to pray for itself; and, since thou hast brought him [*or, her*] into the world, may it please thee to preserve h in it, that he [*or, she*] may be an useful instrument of thy glory, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in h generation, Grant h the benefit of baptismal regeneration, that being born in sin, and a child of wrath, it may be renewed and made a child of grace; and, being received, into covenant with thee, may be steadfast in faith, joyful thro' hope, and rooted in charity; and may so pass thro' the waves of this troublesome world, that finally it may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ thy Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

For a Young Person that is Sick.

I.

O God, whose never-failing Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth, tho' thou hast laid thy hand upon me, and cast me upon the bed of sickness, yet nevertheless my hope is, and shall be, in thee. Be thou my Deliverer, and cure my disease, which lies so hard upon me. Spare me, I beseech thee; and take me not away before I come to years of discretion, and to a right understanding of thine infinite love to me, and the love and duty I owe to thee. May it please thee to restore me to my former health; and give me grace to spend what time thou shalt allow me more, to those great ends for which thou allowest it! Or else take me to thyself into those blessed regions, whither my Saviour Christ is gone before, to reign with thee in bliss and felicity. This I beg for the sake of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

II.

HE A R me, O God, and be merciful unto me; oh remember not the sins and offences of my youth; but, according to thy mercy, think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness. If thou wilt, thou canst make me whole; or if thou callest me hence, thou canst make me happy. Dispose of me as shall seem best in thy sight; and prepare me, I beseech thee, for whatsoever thou designest for me. Thou art my Helper and Redeemer; make no long tarrying, O my God. *Amen.*

For one of Middle Age.

O Almighty and everlasting God, thy goodness to me has been wonderful in giving me a being, in preserving me hitherto; in supplying me with the necessaries of this life; but especially, and above all, in giving thine only-begotten and dearly beloved Son, to become incarnate, and suffer, and die, in my stead, to open a passage for me to another and better state. And, though thy hand lies heavy upon me at present, I cannot doubt but it is in mercy, and for my good. For which reason I beseech thee to sanctify it to me, that it may be a means of weaning my affections from this short life, and its transitory enjoyments, which, I plainly see, are utterly unable to preserve either life, or health, when thou callest for it; and must certainly leave those in a helpless condition, who have nothing better to trust to. Let it also make me truly sensible of the real value of that health I now want, and of all the other blessings thou hast given me to partake of; and put me upon perfecting my repentance, before it be too late. I am at this time in the prime of my age and strength, but as easily to be cut down by thy hand, as the grass by the hand of the mower. Suffer me not to set my affections upon any thing here below, but upon the eternal enjoyment of thee, and thine inestimable re-
wards

wards in Heaven; nor to reckon upon the wonted vigour of my age, but upon my present inability, and the nearness I am possibly in to death, and a future state. Teach me a perfect submission to thy holy Will, that I may account of life, only as an opportunity of doing thee farther services; and may use it, whilst continued to me, to be in a great readiness for death, that whensoever that comes, I may receive its summons without surprize, and may willingly quit all that I have here, to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better. My time at best is short; but if thou art pleased to make it shorter than might have been expected, by taking me away in the midst of my days, I commit myself into thy hands, to do with me as seemeth thee good. Only, I beseech thee, remove me not hence, till thou shalt have fitted me for a better and more lasting state, through Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

For one that is grown Old.

MY life, O Lord, draws towards a conclusion; and I esteem myself as one of those that are going down to the grave; and, considering the years I have already lived, I cannot think it strange, if I see no more good days in this world. Others that are younger may die quickly; but I know assuredly, that I must be gone in a very little time. The thread of my life wears off apace, so that I cannot but suppose it to be near an end. The number of my days is already extended beyond that of my contemporaries, most of whom are gone before me; and I am not so vain as to imagine, that I can be exempt from that mortality, which is the common fate of all men. Besides, this sickness is a fresh *momento* to me, to put me in mind of the tottering state of my earthly tabernacle, and that I know not how speedily it may possibly be dissolved. Wherefore my great care is to see, that my peace be made with thee, before I go thither, whence there is no returning. Help me, I beseech

befeech thee, to do it so successfully, as that I may always have my loins girt, and my lamp burning, and be like those who wait for the coming of the bridegroom, in a readiness, whensoever thou shalt call for me, whether it be at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, or perhaps this very evening. Let thy time be mine, that whenever death appears, it may not find me unprepared to receive it as thy messenger, to conduct me hence. In a long course of many years, I have committed multitudes of sins; whereby I have contracted a heavy load of guilt, and must be irrecoverably undone, without thy pity. But with thee, O Lord, there is mercy, that thou mightest be feared; and with thy Son is plenteous redemption. For his sake forgive me all my past transgressions, and enable me to spend what little of my life is yet remaining, in thy fear, and to thy glory. Cleanse and purify me, that I may have no terrifying guilt adhere to me, to make me afraid of my latter end. Strengthen me by thy grace and Holy Spirit, to fight out the good fight of faith; that, continuing thine to the last, and being faithful whilst I live, I may be eternally saved after death, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For one that has deferred his Repentance.

O Blessed and holy Lord God, who wouldst not any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, be merciful to me a guilty sinner, who have long neglected my duty to thee, and mine own main interest; till my sins are gone over my head, and are, as a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear. Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. And if no man, not the best of men, and the most righteous, much less so vile a sinner as I have been. I have provok'd thy Divine Majesty by a long series of wickedness, for which thou mightst justly have long since cut me off, and given me my portion among
the

the devils, and damned spirits. But, blessed be thy Name, thou hast exercised a great deal of patience and long-suffering towards me. And I hope it is not in vain that thou hast thus graciously borne with me. For I am now fully convinced of my own folly, and the evil of my ways, and do repent, and abhor myself in dust and ashes. Do not thou abhor me too, nor shut up thy bowels of compassion from me. Behold me not as an obstinate sinner, but as one for whom Christ has died, and as a penitent heartily grieved for my past disobedience, and earnestly desirous both of thy pardon, and of grace to walk more holily for the future. It is much too long that I have deferred my amendment and reformation; but, by thy blessing and assistance, I am fully resolv'd to do it no longer. Help me to put these good resolutions in practice, renouncing all my most beloved sins, and earnestly endeavouring to be upright and unblameable in all manner of conversation; that to-day, whilst it is called to-day, I may hear thy voice, and never more dare to harden my heart against it. I know not what a day may bring forth; and for this reason am not willing to trust to to-morrow, when possibly it may be too late for me to think of repenting to salvation. Turn thou me, good Lord, and so shall I be turned; but do it, I beseech thee, immediately, and out of hand. Turn me from all mine iniquities, and make me to serve thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Make me heartily ashamed of my undutifulness and disobedience hitherto, that I should have dared to offend so good and gracious a God; and stir up my heart to serve thee better for the time to come, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, I may live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world. Loose me from all the bonds of my sins; and conduct me to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For

For one that is not duly grieved for his Sins.

Against thee, O Lord, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight; and what shall I now say unto thee; I desire to be deeply humbled for all my undutiful carriage towards thee. But to my shame I find, that I am not so duly affected with my guilt and folly, as I ought to be. I have highly offended thee, and miserably endangered my own salvation; and though I see and know this, yet I find, by sad experience, that I am not so thoroughly grieved at the sight of my sins, as were to be wish'd, and as I truly desire to be. I hope there is no sin that has its full dominion over me; none that I do not unfeignedly long and strive to shake off, and free myself from it, so far as I shall be able: as I also most earnestly desire and beg the forgiveness of them all. Only I am concerned and amaz'd, that I should not be more sensibly griev'd at the consideration of them. Touch my soul, O blessed God, with such an affecting perception of my wickedness, that I may continually lament and bewail it; that rivers of tears may run down mine eyes, because I have not kept thy law; and I may mourn in secret for my transgressions, may confess mine iniquities, and be more heartily sorry for my sin, even with a sorrow that may bring forth a repentance to salvation, that is never to be repented of. O Lord, who causedst water to flow out of the rock of stone, break this stony heart of mine, or rather take it away from me, and give me instead of it a heart of flesh, capable of those impressions, that a guilty conscience is wont to make upon a returning penitent. Make me to loath my sins, and myself because of them; and to humble myself before thee, and in the most submissive manner to supplicate thy grace and Holy Spirit, to lead me in the way of life, and never to give over, till I shall have obtained a blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Upon

Upon a Relapse into Sin.

O Lord God Almighty just and true, thou only Sovereign of the world, on whom is all my dependence, and from whom is all my hope and expectation; I am ashamed and blush to appear before thee, seeing I have of late so highly offended thy Divine Majesty. I know not how to lift up mine eyes unto heaven, but am forced, with the humble *publican*, to smite upon my breast, and call upon thee to be merciful to me a sinner. I have sinned against thee from time to time, and aggravated my sins with many heinous and dreadful circumstances, whereby to render them so much the more provoking. And tho' I have resolved, and promis'd, and vowed an amendment, yet have I again broken my faith, and relapsed into my former guilt, and thereby cut myself off from all right to thy promises. And what can I now plead for myself? From the bar of thy justice I fly to the throne of thy mercy, beseeching thee to be favourable to me, because thou delightest in mercy; and not let me be miserable, tho' I have taken the ready road to misery. I have perverted my ways, and run upon destruction with my eyes open. And though I cannot say I have quite forgotten thee my God, yet I must acknowledge, to my own sorrow and shame, that I have offended thee more heinously by sinning against thee, when I knew myself in thy presence, and when I was fully convinced how evil and bitter a thing sin is, how extremely displeasing to thee, and of what pernicious consequence to myself; and had profess'd, and oftentimes taken the sacrament upon it, that I would serve thee faithfully all my days. My conscience accuses me; my heart condemns me; and thou, who art greater than my heart, and knowest all things, may'st justly stop thine ears, when I cry unto thee in the anguish of my soul. I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son. I have
sinned

sinned against the light of the Gospel, and thine infinite love to me; against the terror of thy threatenings, the charms of thy mercy, the rebukes of thy Spirit, and the checks of my own conscience; against my solemnest vows and engagements, and when I had fully purposed an amendment. Yet is not my sin too great for thee to pardon, or to remove from me, that I never more repeat it. If thou wilt, thou canst make me whole again. And the more my wickedness has abounded, the more therefore let thy grace and good-will abound. *Absolve me from the guilt, deliver me from the power, cleanse me from the pollution, save me from the punishment, of this and all other my offences; reconcile me to thyself here, and crown me with immortal glory hereafter, thro' Jesus Christ thy Son, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.*

For a right Use of the good Things of this World.

THOU, O Lord, art the Father of mercies, and the sole Author of all the blessings I am now, or have at any time been, partaker of; let me never have cause to repent, that thou hast bestowed the same upon me. Vouchsafe me such a right notion and esteem of all earthly privileges and enjoyments, that I may never be brought under the power of any of them; but may constantly use that portion of them thou conferrest upon me, with temperance, and sobriety, and charity, for the time they are continued to me, and with a ready disposition of mind to part with them, whensoever thou shalt see fit to strip me, either of the whole, or of any part of them; and with such heavenly-mindedness, and an eye so immoveable fix'd upon the unconceivable rewards of the other state, that I may never dare to set these in competition with them. Incline my heart to a constant solicitude for another life, and a care to lay up to myself treasure in Heaven, by a good improvement of whatever I enjoy here below. Grant I may

never be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in thee the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy; may be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; and so may lay up to myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal life. Make me truly sensible, how impossible it is to serve both God and mammon; and that if I immoderately love the world, and the things in it, this is a certain sign, that the love of God is not in me. Awaken my sluggish soul, that it may open its eyes, and look past this present state, and aspire after those true riches, to which all that this world contains bears no manner of proportion. Be my God, and my Guide in all my concerns; and grant me so to pass thro' things temporal, that I finally lose not the things eternal. This I beg for thy mercies sake, in thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.
Amen.

For a truly Christian Behaviour in all respects.

I.

O Eternal and everlasting God, who hatest all iniquity, and canst not look upon the least sin with approbation; dispose me for a due attendance to the state thou hast placed me in, and the preparation I am necessarily to make for another, before I am summon'd hence. Work in me both to will, and to do of thy good pleasure, that so I may live in all holy conversation and godliness, and may pass the time of my sojourning here in thy fear, exercising myself continually to have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man. Open mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law. Enlighten my mind, that I may know thee; and not with a barren and useless knowledge, but such as may produce the happy fruits of good works. Put thy law in my heart,

heart, and write it in my inward man, that in nothing I may dare to sin against thee, but my whole life may be a continual study to please thee. Make me sorrowful for my sins, and intent upon a better obedience for the future, humble under thy chastisements, devout in thy service, thankful for all thy mercies, fearful to displease thee, and desirous, above all things, to approve myself to thee. Remind me of my duty to my neighbour, that I may love him as myself, and do to all others, as I would they should do to me; being obedient to my governors, whether spiritual or temporal; respectful to my other superiors; loving, and useful, and obliging, to my equals; affable and courteous to my inferiors; just to all, and charitable and assistant to those that are in need. And put me upon a diligent watch over myself, that I indulge no unreasonable lust or passion, no vice or immorality of any kind, but may be progressive in goodness, may cleanse myself from all my defilements, and may aim at being holy, as he which has called me is holy. Thus I beseech thee, O gracious God, to grant that I may both perceive and know, what things I ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O God, tho' my Spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak, and I can do no good thing without thy assistance. Do thou strengthen me by thy good Spirit, to bear up against all the opposition that shall befall me in the performance of my duty, whether from men or devils. Let no temptation be too powerful for me to withstand it with courage, and an undaunted resolution to proceed in my integrity. Nourish all the seeds of grace that are sown in my heart, and make them fruitful unto every good word and work. Let my light so shine before men, that they may see my good works, and glorify thee, my

Father, who art in Heaven. Make me a faithful steward of all those talents, wherewith thou hast entrusted me, for the good either of myself or others; that I may not be afraid to give up my accounts, when the Lord shall come to reckon with me. Give me the increase of faith, hope, and charity, and all other christian graces; and, that I may obtain that which thou dost promise, make me ever to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

III.

O Thou God of peace, sanctify me wholly; and I pray thee, that my whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A general Thanksgiving for Mercies received.

I.

ALmighty and most loving Father, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, I here prostrate myself at thy feet, humbly acknowledging thy bounty and goodness to me, desiring to bless and praise thy holy Name, both now and for evermore, for such thine abundant loving-kindness. It was of thine own good pleasure, that thou at first gavest me a being, when I was not: it is of thy most gracious hand over me, that I am still preserved in it, notwithstanding all the dangers to which I lie continually exposed. Thro' thy immense patience and compassion towards me, I am now on this side the grave, and everlasting misery; for I have deserved nothing of thee, but thy heavy wrath, and implacable indignation. Yet dost thou not fail to multiply thy blessings upon me from day to day, blessings both spiritual and temporal, for this life, and in order to a better. Praised be thy name, O Lord, for that thou hast dealt thus lovingly with me! While I live, will

I praise the Lord ; yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises to my God. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and salvation all the day long ; for I know no end thereof. Blessed be the Lord my God, who only doth wondrous things ! And blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever ! And all the earth shall be filled with his Majesty. *Amen. Amen.*

II.

THOU art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. May men and angels never cease to worship and adore thee, and laud and magnify thy blessed Name, for thine infinite goodness to all the sons of men. As for myself, it shall be my constant study, to express my unfeigned gratitude for the innumerable benefits I have received from thy bounty : which are as great, as they are every way undeserved, and so call for the utmost returns of duty and thankfulness to the Author of them. All praise, all glory, be to thee for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life ; for my health and strength, my reason and understanding, my peace and quiet of mind, my credit and reputation, the plenty of outward good things wherewith thou hast blessed me, my friends and relations, and benefactors, or whatever tends to make my being here comfortable. It is all owing to thee alone ; and to thee therefore be the praise throughout all ages. *Amen.*

III.

BUT, above all, may my soul, and all that is within me, glorify thee, O Lord, for that most gracious provision thou hast vouchsafed to make for me, in order to a better life, when this shall have an end ; for my redemption by the death and passion of my blessed Saviour ; for the glad tidings of the Gospel, which not only hath brought life and immortality

talities to light, and shewn us the way to it, now opened, thro' his merits, to all that duly endeavour after it, but has moreover informed us what duty is required in order to it, and how we must be qualified before we can be partakers of it; for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles at *Jerusalem* on the day of *Pentecost*; for the glorious effect of that descent in the speedy and miraculous propagation of Christianity thro' the world; for that assistance which is yet continued to myself and others, for enabling us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; for thy word and sacraments; for the examples of thy saints and martyrs, of the holy apostles, and, above all, of our blessed Lord himself, who was made like to us in all things, sin only excepted; and for all the means of grace, and hopes of glory, that we enjoy thro' him. Oh that I could praise thee as I ought, for these thine unspeakable mercies, and as the blessed spirits above praise thee! that as heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory, so my heart, and my mouth, may be duly filled with thy praise, who art the Author of this good to me! However, so far as my present state will admit of it, I will not refrain my tongue from proclaiming thy wondrous works; I will give thanks unto thee, for that thou hast done; and will hope in thy Name all the days of my life. *Amen.*

IV.

LET a sense, I beseech thee, O Lord, of these thy great mercies be constantly fixed in my mind, and so deeply rooted and settled there, as that I may never make thee any unequal returns for them; but all the powers of my soul may exert themselves to set forth thy glory. Fill my mind with such unfeigned gratitude to thee, as may never cease to shew forth itself, not merely by a barren return of praise, but likewise by the holiness and uprightness of my conversation. Make me to be in the fear of the Lord
all

all the day long, and never let it enter into my heart, to do any thing unworthy of such excessive goodness to me; but that I may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

V.

HOLY, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

II MAGI

